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# The Congregational Review.

*MARCH, 1888.*

## CONCERNING WORLDLINESS IN THE CHURCHES.

It is a matter of regret that the doctrinal questions raised by Mr. Spurgeon's "Down-grade" articles have served to keep out of view the even more serious allegations as to the decline of spiritual life and practical godliness in the churches. The evil of this is twofold, it fosters an exaggerated idea of the value of correct opinion, and it diverts attention from those "weightier matters of the law" which need to be specially emphasized. For, whatever value may be attached to sound teaching, it must surely be confessed that its great end is to produce a holy life; that, as the Lord Himself instructs us in the Sermon on the Mount, the true test of every tree must be the fruit which it bears. The peril of mere theological discussion is that men may come to regard themselves as saints on no other ground than the correctness of their opinions. Their spirit may be utterly at variance with the "mind of Christ," and the worst excesses of that spirit may be shown in vindication of what they regard as the truth of Christ; and yet they may esteem themselves the friends of Christ in some special sense because they profess a correct creed about Him. The heated partisan who lives, moves, and has his being" in an atmosphere of Pharisaic conceit of himself and ungenerous suspicion of others; who is never so happy as when he is besmirching some honoured name with charges of heresy; who exhausts his vocabulary of abuse in denouncing all those who differ from him—is one of the worst products of this unfortu-

nate discussion between men who, at heart, are brethren in Christ, and have a common zeal for the glory of His name. The bitter uncharitableness approaching to malignity expressed in the anonymous letters which have come into our hands would itself be sufficient to suggest doubts as to the wisdom of the style of attack which has been adopted. Corresponding faults are, of course, to be found on the opposite side; but the wildest extravagance in speculation, and the most extreme abuse of liberty, hardly work as much mischief as the utter absence of Christian charity in the conduct of some who pose as being *par excellence* defenders of the orthodox faith. The stimulus given to the ill-omened activity of men of this type by Mr. Spurgeon's sweeping strictures upon his brethren cannot easily be over-estimated.

Our present subject, however, is the melancholy picture which Mr. Spurgeon draws of the actual condition of the churches. In the position which he lays down we are happily in entire agreement with him—

Where (he says) the gospel is fully and powerfully preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, our churches not only hold their own, but win converts; but when that which constitutes their strength is gone—we mean when the gospel is concealed, and the life of prayer is slighted—the whole thing becomes a mere form and fiction. For this thing our heart is sore grieved. Dissent for mere dissent's sake would be the bitter fruit of a wilful mind. Dissent as mere political partisanship is a degradation and travesty of religion. Dissent for truth's sake, carried out by force of the life within, is noble, praiseworthy, and fraught with the highest benefits to the race. Are we to have the genuine living thing, or are we to have that corruption of the best from which the worst is produced? Conformity, or nonconformity, *per se*, is nothing; but a new creature is everything, and the truth upon which alone that new creature can live is worth dying a thousand deaths to conserve. It is not the shell that is so precious, but the kernel which it contains; when the kernel is gone, what is there left that is worth a thought? Our nonconformity is beyond measure precious as a vital spiritual force, but only while it remains such will it justify its own existence.

This is what we never fail to urge. The question whether Nonconformity is maintaining its spiritual power is one that has occasioned much serious thought to all earnest

and devout men in its ranks. This burden is not borne by Mr. Spurgeon alone. We are not insensible to the existence of many of the evils which he describes with his usual graphic power. No one who desires that our churches should be a great power for Christ can regard with complacency the worldly temper which is abroad, and of which we see illustrations much more grave than those on which Mr. Spurgeon dwells. We are not insensible to the mischief which results from the spirit of self-indulgence, the love of display, the worship of fashion, and the thirst for pleasure, which are lowering the tone of religion in too many quarters. We differ from him rather as to the mode in which that world-spirit in which Christianity has found its worst enemy from the days of the Apostles down till now is to be met. We are at one with him as to its malign influence and the evil which it threatens Christian life among us; our difference is as to the way in which it can best be counteracted. Appeals to the example of the past appear to us of very little use unless they be made with great discrimination. The children of the Puritans would be recreant indeed if they did not learn much from the example of those high-minded servants of God. To sneer at Puritans is a sign of melancholy degeneracy. But it is one thing to honour them for their fidelity to Christ and to follow them so far as they followed Him; another and entirely different thing to become servile imitators. We are living in an age when it is of no use whatever to lament over departures from the ways of the fathers, unless we are prepared to show that those deviations are for evil and not for good. If we are to produce any effect at all it must be by a "sweet reasonableness" which will constrain respect alike by the force of the arguments it employs and by the sympathetic spirit in which they are urged. "I was never able," says Mr. Spurgeon, "to speak sponges," and *The Pall Mall Gazette*, of whose approval we congratulate our friend, says—

Therein we sympathize with him mightily. Mealy-mouthedness seems to some people the substitute for all virtues, and as for the words, which are quick and powerful and sharp as a two-edged sword, the description itself is sufficient to secure their condemnation.

The spirit which is revealed in these words is causing sufficient trouble in politics. We should be sorry to see it introduced into religion also. We hope we need not disclaim any sympathy with "mealy-mouthedness," but if our aim be to convince those who differ from us we shall certainly be wiser to have recourse to persuasion rather than denunciation. We doubt whether any man was ever converted from error by being told that he was a fool if he held to it. Contempt for the understandings, or suspicion as to the motives of our opponents must deprive us of all power to affect them. So on these religious questions, if we start with the assumption that all who do not follow with us are enemies to Christ, and proceed to condemn them accordingly, nothing is so certain as the utter failure which awaits our efforts. By all means let us have the powerful word, no matter how sharp, provided it be a word of true and forcible argument. Far be from us the desire to restrain the expression, even of righteous indignation against evil; but it must never be forgotten that it will be effective only as that which is condemned is shown to be positive evil. There is so much to honour in thorough fidelity to a man's convictions that we can be thankful for a man who can truly say that it is not in him to "speak sponges." The church never needed more to hear the voice of a Boanerges who will boldly speak out the truth which is in him. But if his word is to be a living power, he must seek to understand the position of those whom he desires to influence. His appeals will be of no possible use so long as those to whom they are addressed deny the principles on which they are based, and his first business is to establish these.

For example, there is Mr. Spurgeon's idea of worldliness. It would be contested by numbers of men on whose Christian character not an imputation can rest. They are sincere believers and earnest workers, but they do not see any moral wrong in a dramatic entertainment, and they deny that an occasional visit to a theatre is a sign of a worldly spirit. On the contrary, they insist that it is not only a legitimate but an extremely healthful recreation, that it so diverts the mind as to afford an

effectual relief from the wear and tear of severe business life, and at the same time that it has distinct value in the education of the mind; is an intellectual lesson as well as a pleasure. To tell such men that "the Lord our God is holy, and he cannot compromise His own glorious name by working with persons whose grovelling tastes lead them to go to Egypt—we had almost said to Sodom—for their recreation," is more than useless. It not only does not convince, but it excites mingled amusement and resentment. There may be stage-plays which answer to this description, but if so, they would be just as loathsome to these men as to Mr. Spurgeon himself. The idea that all plays are of this character—that Henry Irving's performances for example, come within such a category—would be judged by them unworthy of serious notice or reply. If they are to be moved, it must be by a quickening of conscience on these points, and this can only be effected by showing what objection may reasonably be taken to the theatre, even in its best estate.

Time was when a Nonconformist minister who was known to attend the play-house would soon have found himself without a Church, and justly so; for no man can possess the confidence even of the most worldly, who is known to be a haunter of theatres. Yet at the present time it is a matter of notoriety that preachers of no mean repute defend the play-house, and do so because they have been seen there.

In the view here expressed we are in accord with Mr. Spurgeon. We feel, perhaps, as strongly as he does in relation to the lowering influence of the theatre upon religious life. Our objections may be of a different type, but they lead up to the same conclusion. But we should reverse the sequence of events in the last sentences, and say that if Christian men are seen in a theatre it is because they see no sin in their being there, and that if this be their opinion, it is far better that the world should know it. But we must go beyond this. Accepting the facts as stated, do they not show a considerable change of opinion which must be dealt with? If ministers of "no mean repute" can defend the theatre, and having the

courage of their convictions, pay an occasional visit to it themselves, without losing position, there is clearly need of something more than mere denunciation. They must be shown to be wrong if the power of their teaching and example is to be broken. Otherwise the effect of calling attention to them will be the very opposite of that intended ; for many who have hesitated as to indulgence in such recreation, will find no difficulty in dismissing their scruples when they learn that there are leaders in the Church who regard them as only the doubts of weaker brethren.

Our contention is that these are questions which cannot be decided by appeals to antiquity, or by mere authority. Mr. Spurgeon is on one side, the "ministers of no mean repute" are on the other, and if it is left there, the inevitable result will be that the question will be treated as an open one. The day is gone by when a rule could be imposed on the churches on the ground that it was observed by our fathers. "The Puritan," says Mr. Spurgeon, "is not more notorious for his orthodoxy than for his *separateness from the world*." Instead of a Puritan we might surely here read the word Christian, and the change is more than a mere verbal one. The aim of the "Puritan" was to develop the highest form of Christian life, but it must be admitted even by those who have the most profound sympathy with Puritan principles and aims that there are other types of Christian character beside that with which this name is so honourably identified. It must be said, in passing, that Puritanism has been made responsible for ascetic ideas and practices, and an extreme development of a particular side of the Christian life, without any sufficient warrant. The Evangelical Revival gave a far more sombre colour to the entire conception of Christian duty than prevailed among the Puritans themselves, and for a time the school which it founded in the Anglican Church was powerful enough to impress its ideas upon others. But surely only the bigot, and a bigot of a very narrow school would assert that it is the sole and exclusive type of true godliness. The late Bishop Wilberforce writes in his diary about "good old-fashioned Church of England piety." The

phrase has an offensive sound, and yet it represents a type of character entirely distinct from that which prevails in Puritan circles, whether inside the Church or among Dissenters. The latter type is seen in its extreme form among those Churchmen who approach the Plymouth Brethren, and indeed are scarcely to be distinguished from them, except by the single point that they remain nominally attached to the State Church. Old-fashioned English Churchmen of the best order, may be equally godly, but their piety takes a different shape, and many Dissenters have to recognize and admire their pattern of goodness. Even where they have not abandoned their old Puritan ideal they have learned to believe in the sincere piety of others, who take a different view of many practices from those ascribed to the Puritans. They have been brought into closer intercourse with men who could hardly understand the Puritan scruples, much less share them, and they have found in them fruits of piety which forbade all doubts as to their Christian character. The result has been a modifying of their own view, and if this needs correction it must be done by intelligent argument.

There are few points in which the difference between the two schools is more apparent than this of conformity to the world. The interpretation of this phrase, still adopted by numbers, is not only narrow, but is extremely superficial, and so unsatisfactory. It claims the authority of the Puritans on its side, but in truth it exhibits a sad degeneracy from Puritanism. It has taken up and exaggerated its negations, but it has forgotten its nobler and its manlier lessons. It deals with outward acts, not with inward feelings and principles; with matters of dress or association not with the spirit by which the life is inspired and governed. To them the world is representative of gaiety, whether in vestment or in action; of garments in which is an element of display; of society in which there is nothing directly religious; of recreations in general. It is curious and interesting to note how the ideas even of those who have this ascetic conception of Christian life vary. The style of dress adopted to-day by many of those who still hold aloof from what they

regard as worldly pleasures would have been condemned by their own religious ancestry years ago as severely as these amusements. The change has come gradually, and was inevitable, but it only suggests the doubtful character of the standard which the school has sought to set up. Extreme plainness of dress is obligatory on those who feel it to be so, but they have no right to impose on others the law which they have, in all honesty of conscience, accepted for themselves. They are not entitled to assume that an aesthetic taste, with all its fastidiousness about appearance, is a sign of worldly temper, still less to take credit for the absence of it in themselves. The difference is probably one of temperament, education, or inclination, not of religion at all. Religion is not dress any more than it is meat or drink, and yet there are religious principles which apply to the one as to the other. The danger is lest these be frittered away in a mere care about externals.

So with what are called worldly amusements. If we ask what they are, we are pretty sure to get as many different answers as there are individuals to whom the question is proposed. With some the theatre is of the world, with others the card-table, and others the ball-room. It may be that all are right, or, at all events, all may be so cultivated as to promote frivolity, to minister to unhealthy excitement, to dissipate thought and energy needed for the serious business of life, and all that is of the earth, earthly. But certainly abstinence from them all is perfectly consistent with the presence and dominion of a worldly temper. If, indeed, it leads to a Pharisaic temper, what could be more worldly.

There are few subjects on which there is more need for the formation of a well-matured opinion. The day is past when it was necessary to argue against excessive restrictions. At present the danger rather is lest the idea should prevail that there ought to be no restraint at all, but that every Christian should simply gratify his own fancy, without any appeal to conscience at all, as to the real meaning of our Lord's suggestive and searching words, "they are not of this world." That is a description for all times. The world

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changes in its outward aspects, in its spirit it is the same in all ages and under all forms of civilization. It hated the Master, it will hate the disciples in so far as they are like Him. Unworldliness must ever be a distinguishing quality of Christian character. What does it mean ?

All endeavours to draw a line between what is lawful to a Christian and what is forbidden, have not only proved inadequate, but they fail absolutely to get at the heart of the Lord's teaching, are a miserable resting in the letter, without realizing the spirit. His words go far deeper ; and they who fancy that they can reach his ideal by denying themselves a few amusements, for which, perhaps, they have no taste ; or, as is the case with some, by making their spirituality a plea for evading unpopular testimony and unwelcome duty, are deceiving their own souls. It is the spirit of the world against which the warnings of the New Testament are directed. That spirit may enter into and pollute our holiest things, whereas amid all the moil and turmoil of engagements esteemed common and unclean, there may be a spirit which redeems and sanctifies them. There may be unworldliness in polities and worldliness at a prayer meeting. There may be unworldliness in our recreation, and alas, there may be worldliness in our hours of prayer or pursuit of religious activity. It is by the temper of the man that the character and life are to be judged. As the heart is, so he is—of the world worldly, or in Christ a Christian. In vain are all mortifications of the flesh if there is no crucifixion of its unholy desires. In vain do we label certain social amusements, intellectual pleasures, and political excitements, worldly, and abstain from them if we indulge in pride and self-consciousness, arrogance and self-seeking, luxury and ease. If we are afraid to speak for Christ, when there are mighty forces arrayed against Him ; if we love always to be on the winning side, without sufficient care to consider whether it be the right ; if in our inmost heart we are so staggered by those words of Christ, " Woe unto you when all men speak well of you," that we act as though we believed the opposite to be true, and love to bask in the sunshine of the world's favour, and soothe our ears with the

echo of praises never bestowed except on those who are prepared to accommodate principle to the exigencies of circumstance, and ready to fall down and worship whatever image the world is pleased to set up : then, whatever be our professions, and however carefully we seek to redeem them by deference to the most minute scruples, we are still of the world.

It is only as this conception of unworldliness is fully grasped that we shall be able to deal intelligently with the question relating to worldly amusements which have become of such pressing urgency. It is impossible to deny that there is a greater laxity of practice in relation to them than was common even in our own earlier days, and that where it prevails it is for the most part accompanied by a serious deterioration of Christian character. The reaction, if any, from the severe restrictions of the past has been extreme, all the more so because it has not been intelligent. It has been a revolt against a law for which no authority could be shown, and in its resolution to assert freedom it has too much lost sight of the Apostle's teaching that there are lawful things which are not expedient. It is on this latter point that the strength of resistance to tendencies in which undoubtedly there are many and powerful elements of mischief ought to be concentrated. But if it is to be made effectual, there must be a full and thorough enforcement of the principle of separation laid down by the Apostle John, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The protest against amusements which nurture a spirit of frivolity, which are apt, to say the least, to weaken the fibre of the spiritual nature, and which are thus unfriendly to the growth of piety, must be based on a principle which is applied with consistency to all developments of the worldly spirit which have been too generally treated with extreme indulgence.

The world is one form, and a very powerful form too, of Antichrist. To suppose that it can be overcome by self-denial in a few particulars, accompanied possibly by indulgence in others, is the wildest of dreams. It has to be met at every point, for there is no place so sacred as to be absolutely free from its intrusion. Its forms are Protean,

and some of them wear an aspect of sanctity which would deceive the very elect. For its essence is selfishness, and selfishness is proud, thinks of itself more highly than it ought to think, has little care for man, and casts aside even the fear of God when it crosses the path of its ambition or its ease. The spirit of caste, which ignores or tramples under foot the spirit of brotherhood, whose fairest example is in the life of Him who was not ashamed to call us brethren, is selfish and of the world. The Pharisaic temper, in its self-satisfaction, in its exclusiveness, in its hardness of tone and harshness of judgment, is of the world. The faithless reluctance to apply the great law of love, which is the will of Christ, to all departments of human life; the weak subserviance to considerations of expediency and interest; the supremacy of a cold and calculating prudence which has no belief in the forces which work for righteousness; the faithless reluctance to trust in the name of the living God, unless chariots and horses be arrayed on His side—are all of the world.

To come down to a still lower level, the worship of success, and, as a consequence, the pursuit of it by methods which betray an absolute want of consideration for others; the piling up of wealth, and the oblivion of the fact that it is a trust to be used for the glory of God; the want of living sympathy with the poor and suffering—these are of the world. The testimony against these forms of evil must be just as earnest and emphatic as that against amusements, if we are to stem that tide of worldliness which is sure to gather force and volume in an age of wealth and luxury. The New Testament insists upon the loving service of man as the true service of God, and we must catch its spirit if we are to impress our generation for good. Of practical tests there is perhaps not one which needs to be so constantly enforced as this, "Keep yourselves unspotted from the world." But we shall not only miss our aim, we shall hardly secure a hearing at all, if we narrow its range of application. Theatre-going and other forms of amusement which are popular, may be (in our judgment are) open to the gravest objections, but there are forms of

worldliness in the Church which pass almost unrebuked, and which indeed do not lower the reputation for piety of men whose distinction it is that they never are seen at a theatre and never encourage the dissipation of a ball. The troublers of the Corinthian Church, who worked for faction and vain glory; Diotrephes, who loved to have pre-eminence; the members of the Philippian Church, whose mind was set on earthly things, and who thus showed themselves enemies of the cross of Christ; "the concision," who loved cowardly compromise—were all of the world; and they have their successors in our own days. Beside these we have other faults of our own. We have worshippers of fashion more than lovers of principle, who shape their opinions and choose their church with a view to their own social advancement rather than the claims of truth. It will be vain to prophesy against theatres or dances or cards, if these spots in our feasts of charity are to be left without any attempt to remove them.

It is very far from our thought to excuse one form of worldliness by using a *tu quoque* argument to its censors. This is a common error, and it is condemned in our Lord's warning to the Pharisees, "These things ought ye to have done and not to have left the others undone." In the spirit of this teaching we desire to insist upon a more thorough and radical treatment of a great evil, of which theatre-going is but a symptom. We would attack the disease at its centre, instead of looking only at some of its outward manifestations, and those perhaps not the worst; and we would do this by seeking to develop a higher ideal of Christian life. A life in which the glory of God is ever present as the first and chief aim; which is so possessed with the reality and grandeur of the unseen, that it is superior to the influence of things seen and temporal, in which the selfishness of the heart is held in check by the omnipotent constraint of love to Christ; out of which the desire to please God and do His will has cast out all weakness and cowardice, is the true separation from the world. That is the life of the saint, the confessor, the hero. It is impossible to conceive of one who was striving after such an ideal wasting time or

strength or money on the mere fripperies of fashion or the frivolities of worldly dissipation. Educate men to this, and we need not be afraid to accept their judgment as to particular forms of pleasure. The application of these principles to particular questions must be reserved for a future article.

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#### THE MINISTRY UNDER CERTAIN SELF-IMPOSED LIMITATIONS.\*

WE pass on to consider some of the limitations which ministers are in danger of accepting as they enter and continue in the duties of their sacred calling. These restrictive conditions, rather than any apparent unpracticalness of preparatory studies, are likely to narrow the preacher and bring artificiality into his work. We would not, however, be understood to imply that the modern ministry, as a whole, is inefficient. Considering the demands which the frequency of preaching to the same congregation makes on the intellectual and spiritual resources of clergymen, it is to be wondered at that so large a majority are successful, and it may at least be fairly claimed that the ministerial, judged by the average of results, compares favourably with the legal and medical professions. We shall therefore discuss certain tendencies to self-limitation, due to various causes, against which every preacher should be on his guard, and which, when they become dominant, produce the results of which complaint is made.

The tendency to what may be called Ecclesiasticism is so influential that freedom from it, even on the part of the broadest minds, can be had only by constant watchfulness. It consists in undue regard for the external organization, especially of the local church over which the minister is established. The pastor thinks that his most important work is to secure additions to the church. He becomes aware that success is measured chiefly by the numerical

\* From *The Andover Review*.

enlargement of the church. There looms before him the annual report of accessions, which will afterwards appear in the year-books of the State Association and of the denomination at large, and by which, as he supposes, his own standing will be affected. Or, if he does not care for that, he finds it a common theory that the increase of the church is the principal object to be aimed at. The effect is twofold. His preaching is directed in undue measure to the act and method of conversion, so that he seldom gets beyond the first principles of the gospel of Christ. He thus reaches only a narrow segment of the real thought and need of his hearers, and only a temporary phase of religious feeling. It also comes about that he devotes personal attention mainly to those who are most likely to come into the church. Thus some ministers seem to be chiefly occupied in persuading young people to make profession of faith. While we do not for a moment undervalue the importance of youthful consecration, nor ignore the value to the young of participation in church life, we are decidedly of the opinion that the proper influence of the pulpit is greatly reduced when the thought and motive of mature life are not usually addressed, and especially when the reason of such limitation is the desire to enlarge the external organization. It is not a good sign if the labours of a revivalist are more highly valued than the constant work of resident clergymen. Because he brings people together for a few days and presses one point, till those who are likely soon to make the outward sign of their faith, or who are most impressionable are induced to become members of the church, it is thought that he, in a fortnight's campaign, has done more good than the pastors of the place in several years. It is singularly ungracious for this class of preachers, who go from place to place without permanent responsibility, and who present but one class of motives, to turn about in conventions of Christian workers, and accuse the clergy at large of inefficiency because the results of revivals are not secured all the time, and then to charge it on courses of instruction in theological seminaries, because the Bible in its original form, doctrinal theology, and church history are made more pro-

minent than the conduct of inquiry meetings and the management of Sunday-schools. But pastors themselves, the best of them, are in danger of valuing the visible result of numerical enlargement above the less tangible growth of spiritual life. It is a weakness of human nature to estimate values by that which is visible and outward, and the temptation is strongest in the religious sphere, where the real results are in the slow hidden processes of character and the interior life. There is liability that in this respect the very elect will be deceived. Ecclesiasticism exalts the external organization. It puts the means in place of the end. We are not aware that the danger is any less in non-liturgical than in liturgical churches.

Another limitation to which ministers are in danger of becoming subject, while not easily defined, is constantly in waiting to put its yoke upon them. For want of a better name it may be called Pietism. One of its characteristics is a *phraseology* out of which very much of the original meaning has evaporated, till it has become arid and without significance. There are words and phrases, some of them taken from the Bible, some from obsolescent doctrinal statements, and some from expressions into which the religious emotion of a former generation poured its heat and glow. This phraseology is heard in sermons and in prayers, and always makes an impression of vagueness. The preacher who has contracted this style would be somewhat surprised and perhaps perplexed, if he were required to translate it into equivalent expressions which everybody understands. Suppose a friend, of correct literary taste, were to take the sermon under which the congregation had been listless, and mark the words and phrases which should be rendered into more definite and intelligible expression. One result might be that the preacher would see he had himself attached no clear meaning to them, that he was in the neighbourhood of thoughts for which he put down some current but too general phrases. The list might include such terms as "salvation," "grace," "faith," "spiritual," "service," "come to Jesus," "kingdom of God," "sanctification," "pouring out of the Spirit," "sinfulness," "corruption,"

"lost," "renewed," "experience," and the like. What was your precise meaning, asks the friend, when you said "the kingdom of God"? Was it not a convenient term to suggest some phase of social improvement due to the gospel? Why do you so frequently employ the word "experience," especially in the plural? Have you not identified the circumstance with the meaning which might have been pressed out of it; and even when you have used the word correctly have you not been magnifying the feelings of men as if those feelings were the highest good of religion? But, replies the preacher, are not these words and phrases found in the Bible, and in the writings of eminent divines? Certainly, and they are, at least the separate words, found in the dictionary, too. And sometimes they may be used with the utmost appropriateness. Your mistake is that you frequently employ them when they are quite remote from your meaning, and sometimes when your thought has not naturally led up to them. The fault is that you habitually use abstract instead of concrete terms, general instead of definite expressions, and that you have been indulging yourself in this way because they have a pious and even Biblical sound. You ring the changes on these words, or rather you ring these words on changes of thought which require more variety and definiteness of expression. You have thought more of the sound than of the sense. It would be an excellent use of some of your hours in the study to read John Foster's essay on "The Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion," an aversion which he traces in part to the vague use of religious phraseology, which is only one remove from cant. The phrase may be pious, but the use of it indolent and slovenly. Profanity is the misuse of pious phrases; and the glib, unreflecting, inappropriate employment of them may not be very much better. In fact, there is no such thing as a pious phrase, any more than there can be a pious fraud. The pietism which rolls the morsel of well-sounding phrases in the mouth to conceal the absence of thought and feeling is the counterfeit of spirituality. Another characteristic of pietism is a tone of expression somewhat plaintive, somewhat languid. It is

apt to appear as a cadence, the voice dying away in a falling or rising inflection, a cadence known among the irreverent as a pulpit tone, a drawl, or even a whine. It is sometimes adorned with a smile which seems to some sweet or heavenly, although others, it must be confessed, are so disrespectful as to call it sickly. When the physical intonation and facial expression do not suggest the pietistic habit, the tone may be detected in the emphasis and proportion of thought. Attention is directed to the sad aspects of life, to its burdens, cares, sorrows, and trials, to the comfort, pity, soothing, and peace which religion affords. Deprivations are more conspicuous than achievements, patience than courage, endurance than service. This same pietistic tone becomes habitual when the proportions of the gospel are reversed and sin is dwelt upon more than newness of life. The positive hopes and motives of the gospel are not ignored, but in such cases, where grace abounds, sin much more abounds. When the attempt is more sedulously made to impress on men the fact that they are sinners of a deep dye than that they are by right the children of God, the reaction will be manifest in the very tone of the preacher. The sinfulness and corruption of man must, indeed, be emphasized, but to dwell disproportionately on them is no superior evidence of piety as compared with dwelling on the hopeful, moving, revolutionizing power of the gospel of Christ. It is really pietism, the counterfeit of piety, affecting style of expression and quality of thought and making impressions of truth which are unreal and unchristian. There is a tendency in the speech and thought of clergymen, or of a coterie of religious workers or talkers, which insensibly affects every preacher in his treatment of spiritual truths and feelings. If, instead of calling things by their right names, instead of speaking out like a man, and, like himself, instead of emphasizing the positive elements of truth, he is vague in speech, plaintive and effeminate in tone, and dwells among the conditions to which the gospel comes rather than among its vital forces, he becomes unreal and loses living contact with the men of his day.

The preacher labours under a self-imposed limitation when he *insulates* truth from life. The insulation of religious truth keeps it out of connection with life by barriers which may be nearly invisible, but are none the less impassable. It is truth of the highest value concerning which the preacher speaks. But for some reason or other it is remote and unreal. He is speaking about God in His character and purposes, about Christ the Friend and Saviour of men, about the eternal significance of the present life ; yet only a feeble impression is made, and many hearers go away blaming themselves for indifference and wandering thoughts. But the difficulty is that the preacher holds truth and life apart. He preaches on some doctrine as that which is to be maintained or believed, as that which the Bible plainly teaches, or which has always been held by the church. His anxiety seems to be that his people should be correct in their religious opinions. Truth is put on the defensive against imaginary objectors. Such preaching may be sound to the core, but it is not helpful nor influential. It is not felt as motive nor as inspiration. The preacher's love of the truth seems in excess of his love of men. He seems to be discharging a distasteful duty in defence of the truth, and to heave a sigh of relief at the end of every sermon. Now it makes comparatively little difference on which side the preacher starts—on the side of truth or the side of life, if only he unites them. The profoundest truth if it is felt to be in vital relation with conduct and purpose, will be welcomed. Men will bear the most searching analysis of motives if they are led on to see the adaptedness of truth to their actual life. If only in some way that truth which he handles with an almost superstitious dread could be taken off that tripod which insulates it, and allowed to touch the ground, thrills of influence would be felt in the hearts of waiting men. Therefore the preacher should speak of that which has become real and helpful to himself. He should declare and enforce that which has become significant to his own thought, and by methods of argument and expression which are characteristic of himself. He is to preach out of reflection and conviction, otherwise hearers

will be doubting whether he really believes all that he says. A few truths which a man really believes will have more effect than a comprehensive system to which he only assents, and which he maintains without sense of reality and importance. In a word, he should be a *preacher*. The gospel is *preached* when its truth is conveyed through the medium of personality, and when the preacher's personality is obviously the result of the truth he declares. He should clear himself of all conventionalism in phrase and opinion, should push aside modes of teaching and of influence which do not suit his natural methods, even as David put away the armour of Saul, and should try to preach neither above nor below the full measure of his genuine conviction. The principal mistake of many a minister is that all his life he is trying to be somebody else.

We are led by these reflections to the most serious charge we have to make against the ministry. We make it in kindness as well as sincerity, and cannot refuse to plead guilty to it for our own part. We believe that the tendencies which have been mentioned, and which are limitations on the influence of preaching, are results, usually, of a single cause, which is, *mental indolence*. Ministers may fail on account of having mistaken their calling, from constitutional sensitiveness or timidity, from inadequate intellectual power, or from poor health. Such causes we are not now considering. But when ministers are found exalting the outward organization, vapouring in vague religious phrases, adopting the artificial tone of sentimentality or sanctimoniousness, and failing to make religious truth real to actual life, the reason in most cases is intellectual laziness. Not but that such preachers work hard, both early and late. Not but that they are busily occupied every hour of the day. Not but that they make sacrifices of personal ease for the sake of their people. The ministry as a class cannot be accused of *general* laziness. But when they are ineffective for the reasons given above, the real cause is intellectual laziness. The toil of thought is unwelcome. The preacher does not do his own thinking, or does not do it thoroughly. We do not mean that he does

not study, that he expends his energies in running about his parish. He may be an omnivorous reader and a proficient scholar. But the toil of brain by which alone he can be carried through to the significance and uses of truth he will not undertake. He thinks his way *into* a truth of the gospel, or a problem of life, but he does not think his way *through*. He jots down some suggestions that come to him and writes them out till the usual amount of paper is covered, and on Sunday reads or declaims what he has written, but has been skirting the outside without once penetrating to the heart of the truth, or the secret of life. He preaches the gospel, but is not able to say with Paul, "according to *my* gospel." It is for this reason that he attempts to build up the external organization and so seems to be securing results, for this reason that he glides into the current of traditional expression and the tone of dreamy mystical, pietistic feeling. It is for this reason that he never gets truth out of the clouds and into its relations. He does what human nature is always doing, holding itself up with props of conventions and customs so that it need not stand alone; satisfied with that which is accredited as safe and sound, so as to avoid the laboriousness of thinking along the lines of old truth into new applications and needs, a task which is always in important respects a solitary task, out of the line of traditions, precedents, and agreements. Whether or not one expends his strength on this most fruitful toil depends not on the proportion of his preparatory studies, but on his own honest, earnest, deepening love of the truth, for the sake of the truth, indeed, but still more for the sake of men.

There is no remedy for ineffectiveness from this cause in artificial changes as from written to extemporaneous preaching. The method of delivery has an importance, but it is only secondary. The cure will not be found in attaching more sacredness to the pulpit, nor in reducing its sacredness by colloquialisms. The panacea for lack of effectiveness is not in having a more familiar acquaintance with men, nor in choosing themes of passing interest. People do not want preaching to become practical rather

than doctrinal, nor to have the minister more frequently in their offices and parlours. If asked, they might not be able to say what they do want. But when truth spoken out of real personal possession and conviction comes to them they respond. It is the true spirituality which is a sense of the reality of God, of the seriousness and value of life, of the imperativeness of duty. To possess this, not brilliancy, nor talent, nor fervour is essential, but an earnest interpretation of truth into life and of life into truth, while the preacher himself is seen to be realizing the ideal of character which he describes and enforces. It is only in some such conception of his office and some such devotion to his work that the preacher can be permanently useful, or his vocation be considered the highest of callings.

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## RALPH WALDO EMERSON.\*

EMERSON is, beyond all doubt, one of the most impressive figures in American literature. In a sense, indeed, he might almost be described as its father, for to his teaching and influence is largely due its emancipation from its previous subservience to the ideas and traditions of the old country. He has been bracketted with Carlyle, and though there were very marked differences between the two men, they both belonged to the same class. They were both men of intuition rather than of patient thought, indeed were contemptuous of any approach to exact reasoning, and influenced men by flashes of genius rather than by the lucid exposition and quiet working out of great principles. Neither of them was fitted to build up a great system or found a school of disciples, but both left an impress upon the minds of those who came under their influence which could not easily be effaced. Everywhere we meet minds, and those often of

\* *A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson.* By JAMES ELIOT CABOT.  
Two vols. (Macmillan and Co.)

the highest order, which attribute much of their development and power to the impulse communicated to them by these great teachers. They had not accepted their doctrines, and probably were fully conscious of the mischievous character of much of their teaching, but not the less had they profited by the contact with other minds of such remarkable insight and such fearless independence. In no respect, perhaps, did they affect men more than by their own devotion to truth and reality. Carlyle's hatred of shame is proverbial. Possibly it sometimes took an exaggerated form, and certainly often expressed itself in uncouth and even offensive style, but the lesson itself was healthful, and one which multitudes needed to learn. With Emerson there is less of the combative tone and more of a desire to present the positive side of the subject, but he has the same reverence for truth, the same determination to buy it at any sacrifice, and to resist any or every temptation to sell it. The same single-hearted loyalty to truth, which he exhibited and inculcated in others, might lead, and in multitudes of cases has led, them to conclusions far away from those which he reached; but it was good for them that this love of truth should be stirred within them, and that they should enjoy the benefit even of passing intercourse with one of speech so pure and sincerity so earnest.

Emerson was regarded by admirers as a seer or prophet, and perhaps unconsciously he came to have something of the same feeling about himself. It is sad to see how many great men are injured, if not entirely spoiled, by injudicious friends and flatterers. No man, however eminent his graces and distinguished his abilities, is entitled to speak with oracular authority, or expect that the world will receive his *ipse dixit* as though it were the word of God Himself. But there are admiring devotees always ready to invest men of brilliant genius with this distinction, and they require an extraordinary amount of self-knowledge and self-control to save themselves from falling into the snare. Emerson was a singularly modest man, and therefore, if he erred at all in this point, it was not from an exaggerated conception of

his own wisdom. But his theory and his surroundings alike conspired to give him this tone. He had strong faith in man.

The individual (says Mr. Cabot in describing his view as set forth in his lecture on "Human Culture"), on the whole, is the world. Man who has been, in how many tedious ages, esteemed an appendage to his fortunes, to a brute, to an army, to a law, to a state, now discovers that these things, nay, the great globe itself, and all which it inherits, are but counterparts of high and mighty faculties that dwell peacefully in his mind.

Or as he puts it himself, "In all my lectures I have taught one doctrine, the infinitude of the private man." The application of his principles to his own case was sufficient to give a certain tone of self-assertion. He, as a man, owed authority to no other. He had to take counsel with his own soul, develop its capacities, obey its impulses. He was a Transcendentalist, and a Transcendentalist does not argue. What he says is to be received not as the result of ratiocination, but by the instinctive response of other minds and hearts to his appeals. He was himself a scholar, and in his view the scholar's duties are all comprised in self-trust. He is to feel himself inspired by the Divine Soul, which also inspires all men. This is, in fact, to claim the prophetic character. After describing the work which the scholar has to do, he adds, "These being his functions, it becomes him to feel all confidence in himself, and to defer never to the popular cry. Let him not quit his belief that a popgun is a popgun though the ancient and honourable of the earth affirm it to be the crack." If this referred only to his own personal convictions, nothing could be better put, but when a man undertakes to instruct others he needs something beyond confidence in himself. He must be able to vindicate the truth of his message if he expects it to be received by the world. On this part of his work Emerson looked down almost with contempt. His essays and lectures were prophesying, to which men gave heed in so far as they admired the man and agreed with him.

The impression he produced in New England was largely

owing to the state of things which prevailed at the time when his public career commenced. The Puritanism of better days having lost its original glow and fervour of spiritual life, had become cold, hard, and formal, and had been succeeded by a still colder Unitarianism, itself ever tending to greater rigidity and formalism. Even remembering this, it is not easy to understand the passionate excitement which Emerson's Transcendentalism awakened, chiefly in New England, but in other parts of America as well. But it must never be forgotten that it was in America, with that strong sense of independence valued in a country so vast, and among a people proud in the consciousness of the freedom they had achieved, that this impression was produced. There was nothing of which Americans are less disposed to be patient than the respectable dulness which, alas! was too prevalent in the Churches, and it is perhaps not surprising that in the reaction against it there were many ready to hail that new gospel of individualism which Emerson had to preach. He does not seem to have achieved any remarkable popularity, or to have had any special power as a preacher, and his career as a Unitarian minister was brought to a close by his refusal to administer the Lord's Supper. The explanation of his retirement from the pastorate is thus given by Mr. Cabot :

He was ready to continue the service, provided the use of the elements was dropped, and the rite made merely one of commemoration. This he proposed to the Church in June, 1832. His proposal was referred to a committee, who reported shortly afterwards, expressing their entire confidence in him, but declining to advise any change. They did not conceive it to be their business to discuss the nature of the rite, or the considerations that might recommend it to the minds of different persons; it was enough that it was generally acceptable and helpful, on whatever grounds. It remained for Emerson to decide whether he would resign his office rather than administer the Communion in the usual form, and he went up to the White Hills for a week or so to think it over, during a suspension of the church services, occasioned by some repairs of the meeting-house. It was a difficult decision, for there was much to be said in favour of the view which was urged upon him by his friends, that he ought not to allow a scruple about forms to break up a connection which was, on the

whole, satisfactory and profitable on both sides. He could not expect to find another church so ready to accord him a friendly and partial consideration (vol. i. p. 155).

It is to the honour of Emerson that he listened only to the counsels of honesty. The injury done to the world by the tampering with the plain teachings of conscience and of thought is simply incalculable. The man who, acting on the principle that a religious guide must at all events be beyond the suspicion of dishonesty, sacrifices personal position rather than stoop to some unworthy compromise, or dishonourable evasion, deserves high respect, even though the principle for which he makes the surrender may appear to us to be an error. Emerson's secession gave him moral strength, and the wonderful felicity with which he expounded his theories soon commanded attention. His early addresses at the Phi Beta Kappa Society, in which he delivered what may be called his first prophecies, were a great sensation, and for a time it might have seemed as though he were about to work a revolution. His very freedom seemed to give him new power. His new evangel of the greatness of man found many willing auditors, and for a time he seemed to be a power. But as an influence to guide and control men it has long since passed away. It awakened the passionate devotion of a small literary coterie; it led to all the eccentricities and follies of Brooke Farm, but the "Transcendental" movement, as it was called, soon collapsed, adding only another to the many proofs of the folly of the man who, spurning the guidance of God in His Word, seeks to strike out a path for himself. Emerson has given us many striking conceptions and lofty ideals. He did brave and noble work, especially in the cause of freedom. He was a large-hearted, gentle-souled philanthropist, a daring thinker, an eloquent writer. But it may be doubted whether he has helped any man to a better understanding of the problems of his life and destiny.

Mr. Cabot tells the story of his life well, and it must be read if we are to understand his power. For here is the difference between him and Carlyle. The latter's influence

has been distinctly lowered by a more close acquaintance with the man. In the case of Emerson it is altogether different. No more charming passage is to be found in the book than the account of the relations between Emerson and Father Taylor.

Emerson, while he was at the Second Church, sometimes preached at Taylor's Bethel, and Taylor afterwards lectured and preached in Concord, and spent the night at Emerson's house. "A wonderful man" (Emerson writes in his diary); "I had almost said a perfect orator. The utter want and loss of all method, the bright chaos come again of his bewildering oratory certainly bereaves it of power—but what splendour, what sweetness, what richness, what depth, what cheer! The Shakspeare of the sailor and the poor. God has found one harp of divine melody to ring and sigh sweet music amidst caves and cellars. He is an example, I at this moment say, the single example we have of an inspiration; for a wisdom not his own, not to be appropriated by him, which he cannot recall or even apply, sails to him on the gale of this sympathetic communication with his auditory. He is a very charming object to me. I delight in his great personality; the way and sweep of the man which, like a frigate's way, takes up for the time the centre of the ocean, paves it with a white street, and all the lesser craft do courtesy to him and do him reverence. The wonderful and laughing life of his illustrations keeps us broad awake; a string of rockets all night. He described his bar-room gentry as 'hanging like a half-dead bird over a counter.' He describes —, out on her errands of charity, 'running through the rain like a beach-bird,' 'I am half a hundred years old, and I have never seen an unfortunate day; there are none.' 'I have been in all the four quarters of the world, and I have seen many men I could not love.' The world is just large enough for the people; there's no room for a partition wall.' What an eloquence he suggests! Ah, could he guide those grand sea-horses with which he caracoles on the waters of the sunny ocean! But no, he is drawn up and down the ocean currents by the strong sea-monsters only on that condition that he shall not guide." Taylor, on his part, loved Emerson, though of Transcendentalism he had but a low opinion. Dr. John Pierre records in his diary, with cordial sympathy, a saying of Taylor's on coming out from hearing some Transcendental discourse: "It would take as many sermons like that to convert a human soul as it would quarts of skimmed milk to make a man drunk." But of Emerson he said to Governor Andrews: "Mr. Emerson is one of the sweetest creatures God ever made; there is a screw loose somewhere in the machinery, yet I cannot tell where it is, for I never heard it jar. He must go to heaven when he dies, for if he went to hell the

devil would not know what to do with him. But he knows no more of the religion of the New Testament than Balaam's ass did of the principles of the Hebrew grammar" (Mrs. E. D. Cheney, at the Memorial Meeting at Concord, July 28, 1884).

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## CURRENT POETRY.

Is it on purpose that in this new volume of poetry by Miss Chapman,\* the three best poems come first, viz., "The New Purgatory," "A Strong-minded Woman," and "Aged Twenty-seven"? The poems comprising the book are very unequal, which must necessarily be the case when they are published as a collected whole after having been written at "long intervals of time." They are, what most real poems are, the relics of certain moods of mind, of strains of thought. We say "most," because to some few of the greatest it is granted to be simply no record of a passing mood, but the gradually formulated expression of long years of struggling thought which had to take its own time to grow into speech.

The thoughts expressed here in song are all indicative of great womanly tenderness, of an earnest, serious mind, of a genuine love of truth and beauty; but withal the verses show little diversity of idea, and still less scope of imagination. The writer hovers round one or two central ideas, but in the expression of these there is repetition but no development. She touches one or two chords to which we all respond; but when we listen for more we only hear a weakening vibration of the same, till the sympathetic chords are lost altogether, and we are left at the end of the volume, bereft of our music, listening to a few prose lines on the Queen's Jubilee; but it would tax the powers of the most poetic, as well as the most inspired soul, to become inspired on such a theme. We do not inquire how it is, but it is a fact that all the poets limp alike in approaching this and kindred subjects.

\* *The New Purgatory, and other Poems.* By E. R. CHAPMAN.  
(T Fisher Unwin.)

Oh ! poets, sing out of the well-depths of your own souls, not of outward pageantry and show !

"The New Purgatory" is a noble testimony to the faith in "the larger hope," so that this poem and the one that follows it should alone make us grateful for the volume, were there in it nothing else at all. How love and nothing but love can save the most sordid, sin-hardened, and sin-stained soul ; and how, when the veil hiding the spiritual is rent, we shall learn the deepest truth that even God's wisdom has to teach, or Christ's life and death to reveal, that the essence of the world, of the real soul-world, is love —this the poem tells us in such a way that before we get to the end we are touched almost to tears by the eloquent expression of something that in our heart of hearts we knew was true. A human soul can never sink too low for love's pity, never get beyond love's saving grace. Just that which a man has derided, and set at nought, and trampled under foot, is the influence which will at last raise him from the dust, set his face to the light, and bring him to the feet of his God.

Perhaps the three characters in history which most repel us, most rouse our contempt and dislike, are these three that are brought before us in "The New Purgatory," Jezebel, Nero, Judas Iscariot. Their very names now seem symbolical of wickedness ; though to us Jezebel, in her strong vigour of life, her scorn for weakness of purpose, the triumphant might of her will, is to us more an object of admiration than of contempt. Wicked as she was, she had splendid abilities, a magnificent power of energy, which, turned into the right channels, might have redeemed a world. What is sad about her is the waste of such wrongfully applied gifts, to see a genius going so hopelessly astray, becoming so depravedly bad. Ahab, Nero, and such weak vacillants in will, would not have strikingly changed the fortunes of the world had they been as good as they were weak ; it is with quite different feelings that we contemplate this strong woman, following the dictates of an absolutely hardened heart.

But now see her in "The New Purgatory" of love ;

goodness has not deadened and weakened those beautiful natural powers of life. She is still "alert" and "alive." We should have been disappointed for Jezebel to have changed into some soft-souled, large-eyed St. Cecelia. But the power before turned to evil is now turned to good.

Her furious zeal is grown a deep desire  
To raise her earth-besmirched being higher,  
And kindle in her fellows such a fire.

She follows meekly now where prophets tread,  
And nothing those inspired ones have said,  
But seems to her divine and hallowéd. . . .

O royal woman who hast washed the blood  
From off thee through a loyalty to good  
By tepid souls and tame not understood.

The speaker in the poem, guided by the Spirit of Love, passes on through the New Purgatory, and meets a soft and gracious-visaged man bearing a lute and followed by a troop of little children. He who once made music while Rome burned, now enchant's the ears of the little ones, pausing in his playing to talk to them about the power of "loving thoughts and loving speech."

Exounding to his ewry flock that hung  
Upon the winning accents of his tongue,  
How never lays by lark in April sung,  
  
Nor cradle melodies that mothers teach,  
Nor voice of lyre or lute, could ever reach  
The heart like loving thoughts and loving speech.

Their weakness bade his stubborn fierceness bow,  
Their innocence cleansed his abject brow,  
Their whiteness made him what thou seest now.

Then slow pacing comes one famed on earth for a traitorous kiss, now wrapped in contemplation of his soul's Lord, love having at last even stripped the memory of that kiss of its bitterness. Because he loved so little, he had the more need of love, which now has made him whole.

And so we learn the patience of love, the divinity of

hope, in our poem, and are sent on our way to be the faithful ministrants, the ungrudging priests and saviours of the sin-blinded and the sin-bound.

The poem next in order in the volume, "A Strong-minded Woman," is the strongest, we think, of all. "The New Purgatory" is sweet with tenderness, but it is not so powerful as this; that at times wavers and grows weak, both in rhyme and metre, this never. It has a touch of Browning, and reminds us of the great poet in its swiftness of expression, its condensed thought, and its *hurried* ideas. It has a half defiant strength, and carries us along with it in its swift advance.

See her? Oh yes!—Come this way—hush! this way—  
 Here she is lying,  
 Sweet—with the smile her face wore yesterday,  
 As she lay dying;  
 Calm—the mind-fever gone, and, praise God! gone  
 All the heart hunger;  
 Looking the merest girl at forty-one,—  
 You guessed her younger?

• • • • •  
 There—that's the face I knew—perhaps knew best  
 Of all that knew her—  
 For very few, of all her friendship blest,  
 Saw through and through her.  
 You see she'd many sides, was swift of mood,  
 Of range unbounded,  
 Each note of all the scale she understood,  
 Had caught and sounded.  
 So that to apprehend the complex whole,  
 To praise discreetly,  
 You had to voyage far into her soul,  
 And love completely.

There is something almost masterly in that, in its hidden sarcasm, and its deep love and admiration and reverence for what is right and just.

And have we not all met such women, women of intense life and earnest purpose, who, in their many-sidedness and their boundless energy, are quite incomprehensible to some of their gentler sisters, too absorbed in children and ser-

vants to hear the voices of the great world beyond the four walls of their homes ? Their fellow-women pass them by a little doubtfully, they are so "clever"; their active world-life has incapacitated them for "domestic life"; their books have made them unable to love little children. Their fellow-men are still more doubtful, they are different to their own gentle, obedient, submissive wives and sisters, for the former actually venture to take independent views, state their own opinions, and expect in argument to be treated on an equal footing. There seems no section of society large enough to hold them ; they are outside all sections, isolated in a grand isolation of work, high in thought, pure in heart, tender in soul, with a thousand beating, palpitating, pitying compassions, misunderstood, and, alas ! unappreciated. "A Strong-minded Woman" is a poem we need, and one to be read again and again with greater sympathy and understanding. It is a noble poem, which seems to prove that Miss Chapman could do something greater in poetry, when she has freed herself from all her masters and examples, than anything this volume has to show.

There is a good deal of pathos and sweetness in the next poem, "Aged Twenty-seven," evidently autobiographical, where a woman, oppressed by the burden of the cares of life, expresses her longing for one touch of the hand and sound of the voice of the mother who left her, a little child, at twenty-seven. There is nothing original nor strictly beautiful in it, yet there is a musical sweetness which makes it pleasant reading.

We have dealt chiefly on these three because they seem to us more worthy of attention than the other poems making up the book.

"The Meeting of Dante and Beatrice," as rendered by Miss Chapman, is, we are bound to confess, more beautiful in language and clearer in expression than the corresponding cantos in Cary's well-known translation which possesses so large a claim on our gratitude. There is some fine writing in this "Paraphrase," which is really a free rendering of the original, and has evidently been a work of love. It is that familiar scene of the meeting of Dante and

Beatrice on the mountain, where his lady rebukes the poet for casting away his first love, and wandering after strange allurements. When he meets his beloved on the mountain her face is veiled as a punishment for his sins, and it is only after long prayer and confession that at last his "ten years' thirst" is quenched, and the full revelation of the glory of the face, bright with the sunlight of heaven, is lifted upon him.

"Cassandra," in rhyme and metre and swing and balance, reminds us forcibly of Matthew Arnold's "New Sirens," though this is probably only the result of an accident.

Compare

Give, oh ! give me back my blindness,  
Happy darkness is my choice ;  
I have uttered nought but wailing  
Since thou madest me thy voice.  
Thou hast given me the future,  
But all present joy I lack—  
Miss each passing moment's sweetness,—  
Wherefore take thy false gift back,

with some of the verses in Matthew Arnold's poem.

After such work as we have given it is grievous to sink to so low a level of art as the writer does in "A Woman's Strength," "In a Poet's Footsteps," "The Poet's Task," "My Mistress." We do not know which is more painful, to read poems intentionally humorous, or unintentionally so, but to this latter class belongs "A Woman's Strength."

A very curious work is "Prince Lucifer," by Alfred Austin, introduced to us by a flourish of trumpets in honour of the Jubilee. On the one hand, it appeals to us by beauty of song; on the other, it repels us by the thinly diluted aesthetic philosophy which this very unattractive person persists in talking. It is difficult to understand how such stilted high-toned nonsense could ever have gained the heart of the sweet pure-minded little village maiden who blindly agrees to his philosophy—which seems to consist by the by in a total absence of principle—for the sake of his love. Prince Lucifer's own words that

"Marriage is the winding-sheet of love" indicate the idea that more or less underlies the whole. He thinks that the very notion of a bond of any kind belies the very nature of love, which should be permitted to wander unchecked in any path it may select. This young modern philosopher proceeds from condemnation of the marriage tie to condemnation, as we might expect, of religion itself, till we stand shuddering in a world unhinged and God-forsaken. From contemplation of Prince Lucifer's ideal, and its subsequent failure as it falls in ruins about him, we presume Mr. Alfred Austin means us to learn its impossibility, and the necessity both for marriage bonds, which sanctify and hallow rather than enslave love, and a few forms at least of religion. But we are also taught in the case of Elspeth and Abdiel that it is not the ceremony that makes the marriage, but the love. So perhaps Prince Lucifer is not so wrong after all. Yet, if this is the lesson, it is one not very clearly inculcated, and might be easily missed if not searched for with extreme care. But surely it is too serious a matter to be left in the dim mist of uncertainty?

The prince is an exile from his kingdom because his subjects not unnaturally object to the cutting loose of the social and moral bond which alone makes a man's love worthy of acceptance. They are not so enlightened as Prince Lucifer, and still cling to old-fashioned notions of religion, the new philosophy offered in religion's stead being too finely flavoured for their coarse palates.

A wanderer among the mountains, the Prince meets an old grave-digger, who, though only a peasant, can talk as lofty a philosophy and use as many long words as the Prince himself, and the man informs the stranger that the path he is ascending leads first to marriage and then to death, which proves to be the case. This Adam is a philosopher of a higher order than Prince Lucifer, for his philosophy is a true one drawn from his own trade, "the oldest in the world."

Life is too long,  
But long or short, foolish or wise, this death  
Casts its still shadow half athwart our lives.

The path leads to marriage, insomuch that the Prince falls in love with a shepherdess whom he saves; and to death, because its way led past the grave-yard whither he follows the little white coffin of his child. When the infant is dying, its mother, instinctively turning towards her old faith in her hour of anguish, effectually implores the child's father to call a priest, and have the light at the shrine of the Holy Mother relit, that she may be interceded with to save the precious little life. But the Saint makes no response, the child dies, and then comes the question of burial. It breaks the mother's heart to think of the little form lying in anything but consecrated ground; but the priest will not admit it, till the parents have been legally married. So falls the last stone of Prince Lucifer's philosophy.

That is the story in vaguest outline, not an attractive one; but we should be doing the book great injustice if were to leave the impression on any one's mind that that is all. There is poetry of a high order here, most strikingly shown in the scattered songs of the grim mountains which tower, like two fates, above the lives of these men and women with their small doubts, their feeble "philosophizing," their impatient questioning, and unreasonable distrust. They are so infinitely small, the mountains so sublimely grand, in the great infinity of the ages.

Hear them! The Matterhorn says to the Weisshorn—

Is the storm coming on? Do you hear it?

#### WEISSHORN.

It is roaring up from the south,  
With the thunders piled on its back, and the lightning spears in its  
mouth.  
It is driving the winds before it, it is driving them swift and straight,  
As the wolf drives the kid and the roebuck.

#### MATTERHORN.

Tell it, I stand and wait.

## WEISSHORN.

The trunks of the forest are creaking, the pine-tops waver and sway,  
And the rotten boughs on the air are tossed as the torrent tosses the spray.  
The veil of the snow is lifted, the folds of the mist are torn.

## MATTERHORN.

Tell the thunder to hasten and hurry, lest my scorn should die of its scorn.  
Bid the torrents darken and deepen, bid the avalanche madden down ;  
For tempest and time have done their worst, and I still stand crowned with my crown.  
Let the frail light passions of pigmy man, like levin, and wind, and rain,  
With ephemeral fury rage and pass—I am motionless and remain.

And in between is heard the voice of the torrent pleading for poor deluded mortals “locked out from an empty shrine.” But always above the torrent’s roaring is heard the stern grim tones of the Matterhorn as it answers with scorn for man’s vain endeavours to climb to the highest—

Behold what avail your  
Strain and endeavour !  
Effort and failure,  
For ever and ever.

This is noble poetry indeed, which makes our disappointment all the keener that the general scope and tendency of the teaching of the book is not noble.

Mrs. Webster, in “The Sentence,” has produced a drama of no ordinary power, which will preserve her name and place her high on the roll of modern dramatists.

But yet we are forced to ask ourselves : granting it power, power of dramatic action, no less than of comprehension and representation of character, what end does it serve ? what is its *morale* ? its *motif* ? what are we the better for it ? Perhaps we ought not to ask such questions in these days, when an artist is too often content with displaying his own skill, his own “points,” instead of making them subservient to the great moral and artistic

aim he has in view ; when he cares more that the painting or composition should be done in admirable and clever style than that the picture should be noble and the theme worthy. But is not the result often a degradation of power, a misuse of influence, a declination of what is good, and a building-up of what is irretrievably and radically bad ? Yet if it is art, and skilful art, what does it matter ? is the reply made by nineteenth-century intellects.

We should have thought the disagreeable subject of men falling in love with other men's wives, and of wives falling in love with other people's husbands, had been worn threadbare, and yet this is in truth *all* this book has to tell us, and such a story may be found in police records and court chronicles of to-day as well as in the old Rome to which Mrs. Webster takes us.

The meaning of the title, "The Sentence," we presume is to be found in the revenge pronounced by the Emperor Caligula against those who wrong a woman whom he loves. This is the sweet, tender-souled little wife of a citizen of Rome, Stellio by name. The Emperor's love for her is described in his own words, with perhaps the truest touch of genuine poetry to be found in the book.

She was something tender left my heart—  
Tender and sacred like a daisy weed  
Some tired old man finds by his mother's tomb,  
Who died while he was young enough for daisies.

And he acknowledges that—

Lælia was one to love.  
. . . . not fit for me . . .  
but perfect sweet—  
Therefore I could not wed her.

The "perfect sweetness" Stellio does not appreciate, and he falls in love, and unscrupulously avows it to a widow, "Æonia," who is passionately attached to him. To further their wicked lust they plot to murder Lælia. In a powerfully worked-up scene, when they are making their foul

schemes in a summer arbour, their victim suddenly confronts them. Æonia frankly confesses that they want her out of the way, and she, poor child, broken and crushed, turns back, and in a few minutes, in full view of the gaping fishermen below, has thrown herself over the cliff into the sea.

The Emperor encourages the espousals of the guilty pair, that he may the more surely work his revenge. When all things are ripe for its fulfilment, and in a few hours Æonia is to wed the man she has swallowed so deeply in sin to obtain, Caligula pretends to love her himself, and proposes to make her Empress. She consents after very short converse, in surely a very unaccountable fashion, for she is represented as really loving her betrothed husband, and then the Emperor proceeds to reveal to her a plot for poisoning Stellio by her own hand, forcing her consent by telling her how much he knows of her share in the death of Lælu, and if she will not do it she will all the more surely destroy, not only Stellio, but herself also. But by this final crime she only draws on herself the shame of discovery, and the award of a future life of misery and privation in a desert island.

Such is the drama, "The Sentence," and though, as we have said before, the drawing out of incident to the final catastrophe is fine, we cannot congratulate Mrs. Webster on its achievement. Sin, and the foulest of sins, tracking its victims out to their just punishment and reward, is what it treats of; but the nobility of repentance, the hope of restoration, the majesty and purity of love, are altogether lacking.

RUTH BRINDLEY.

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## THE ENTHUSIAST.

*A STUDY OF MODERN LIFE.*

### CHAPTER V.

ERNEST BARING as a teacher was a square man in a round hole. He had more than sufficient ability for the post, and

in the matter of culture he might safely have challenged competition with any of the assistant-masters of the district, or, indeed, with the Principal himself; but it is not every scholar who makes a good teacher. Ernest lacked patience. He was full of sympathy and kindness to the boys, but he expected attention and obedience in return, and when he encountered laziness and, still worse, sheer stupidity, he was prone to be severe, and sometimes even to lose his temper. He was constitutionally incapable of bearing with fools in their folly, and, like men of his temperament, was in danger of mistaking slowness of intellect for wilful ignorance. Hence the boys failed to do full justice to his high qualities, although his bright and cheerful spirit out of school hours made them forget the severe discipline by which they were sometimes provoked. On the other hand, Mr. Winder was annoyed partly by the unrest which was only too common in Ernest's classes, and still more by the lamentable displays of ignorance on the part of some of the boys. He was ready enough to assert his own authority, sometimes in a very high-handed manner and with not a little passion. But this was regarded by the head master as a special prerogative of his own, in whose privileges none of his subordinates should share. In short, it must be confessed that Ernest was a failure, and though Mr. Winder's fancy for him had led to his appointment, the relations between the two men soon became considerably strained.

Their differences, indeed, were not confined entirely to school affairs. They were both advanced Liberals, or Radicals rather, but they belonged to very different schools. Mr. Winder was of the philosophical Radical type, a diligent student of Bentham, a firm believer in the original sin of State interference with anything outside the immediate sphere of Government. One of his favourite ideas was the commonplace of his party that the only business of Government was to get twelve men into a jury-box. Ernest was the opposite of all this. He had felt the touch of the *geist*, and was full of ardent enthusiasm for great social reforms to be undertaken by the State. Admitting that its

action hitherto had generally been disastrous, he held that we were entering on a new order of things, in consequence of the rapid advance of the democracy. It was one thing, he argued, to deprecate the action of the State when it was representative only of a privileged class, or even a few favoured families, and altogether different when the State was only the people acting in their collective capacity. These new-fangled polities were eminently distasteful to Mr. Winder, who clung fast to the old shibboleths of his school, and regarded any interference with them with the same abhorrence and dread which a stiff, orthodox doctrinaire feels to the teacher of a new idea which has not been included in the narrow sphere of his theology. The Liberal spirit is much more rare than the Liberal creed. The fierce dogmatism with which some eager champions of liberty will insist on their own notions, and the inhospitality which they show to any ideas which are outside the strict lines of their own creed, prove them to be worshippers of the letter rather than children of the true spirit of liberty. Mr. Winder was one of these. His position compelled him to put a restraint on himself when dealing with his Tory opponents in public. It would have been unbecoming the dignity for the head of a great scholastic establishment, a "J.P." of the county, to brand all who differed from him as lacking either in sense or honesty. But he compensated for the enforced moderation of his public utterances by the slashing style which he adopted in the freedom and unreserve of private life. Like many besides, he never looked all round a subject; but what he saw he saw clearly, and what he felt he felt strongly. Hence he could not brook contradiction, felt the difficulty of admitting even that he might be mistaken, was very keen in his denunciations of opponents.

It was a new experience for him, however, to find himself in antagonism with one who could not be suspected of any unfaithfulness to the cause of liberty. Ernest as a politician was to him an unintelligible puzzle. He could not comprehend how one who had such sound views on many points could yield himself to the wild notions which he sometimes advocated. He explained it on the supposition that his

young assistant had been infected by Socialism ; but this was no explanation at all, and certainly did nothing to bridge over the gulf between them. Perhaps neither of them suspected how deep and wide that gulf really was. Mr. Winder, though he would have been most eager in disavowing it, had no real faith in democratic rule. He contended earnestly for the extension of the suffrage and other measures by which the power of the people had been made a reality. But his secret thought, though he would hardly have confessed it even to himself, was that the people would support the middle classes in opposition to the aristocracy. The idea that they would assert opinions of their own, show themselves as contemptuous of the narrowness and prejudice of the *bourgeoisie* as of that of the *noblesse*, and strike out an entirely new line of reform, was as unwelcome as it was novel to this very consistent but somewhat Philistine Radical. He had not deserted any of his old principles, was just as zealous for disestablishment as ever, was ready for drastic reforms in the House of Lords, if not for its entire abolition, and was ready to associate himself with the democratic party for this purpose, but he looked on all new movements with unconcealed suspicion, was keen to detect the cloven hoof of Socialism in any proposals for using the machinery and resources of the State for the elevation of the poor and ignorant. Possibly, had he been in a more influential political circle, and himself been one of its prominent members, he might have been so far affected by the courtesies and compliments of peers and peeresses eager to do homage to an independent Radicalism, which was more likely to trouble its own friends than to injure them and their vested interests, and lost more of the strength of his Liberalism. As it was, no one outside suspected his real position, and he hardly understood it himself.

Of course Ernest was a trouble to him. He liked the ingenuous spirit, and enjoyed the lively and sparkling conversation of the young man, but this only made him deplore the political and other heresies into which he had lapsed. For Ernest, let it be said, had but little respect for the middle classes, and still less for the fetishes in which

they have been accustomed to trust and the Whig leaders they have delighted to honour. Winder, indeed, was no Whig, and could on occasion say very strong things about an aristocratic clique who had treated the Liberal party as an organization for giving them and their friends the spoils of office and the sweets of power. But there were some of its leaders for whom he had a profound respect, and Ernest, instead of sharing it, was rather fond of insisting that the elder man's idols were all of clay. Unhappily both of them were fond of political discussions, and whenever they happened to be thrown together the conversation was pretty sure to drift in this direction. Both of them enjoyed a cigar after the labours of the day were over, and as Winder had a liking for the society of his friend's son, they used, on Ernest's first coming, to spend many of their evenings together. As time went on, however, this intercourse became less frequent. Some little incident in the school ruffled the temper of the Principal, or the discussion would occasionally become more exciting and angry than usual, and in his vexation Mr. Winder would hold himself apart for a considerable time.

Ernest's feelings towards his chief were of a somewhat mingled character. He held him in sincere respect, and was grateful for all his kindness, but he felt himself ever becoming more out of sympathy with him. In truth, this Liberal and Nonconformist to whom he had been accustomed to look up as a sturdy champion of liberty was a bitter disappointment—the first of many he was to meet with in life. His experience, indeed, was not exceptional, though, like others in similar circumstances, he was ready to fancy so. It is very hard for men of different generations to understand each other, even when they hold common principles and aim at a common end. They have grown up in a changed atmosphere and amid surroundings so different that every subject is looked at through a different medium, and so there is an apparent antagonism, which is compatible with much more real sympathy than they themselves suspect. The elder men are slow to receive new ideas, and the younger are too impatient to wait for the

slow process of education. But when to the difference of age, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred becoming more Conservative, is added an original difference of temperament, it is not difficult to predicate an ever-increasing separation.

This was pre-eminently so with the two men of whom we are writing. Winder had never known a touch of enthusiasm. He was resolute, energetic, courageous, and he supposed himself uncompromising, but a more impartial and penetrating eye would often have discovered signs of compromise in his thinking which eluded his own observation. He would have been indignant had any one suggested that he was ever deterred from bold speech or daring action by regard to its possible bearing upon his own interest or position. But there was often a bias of which he was himself unconscious, but which friends and opponents alike perfectly understood. He was not the man on whom any party would care to rely in any time of difficulty. If truth must be told, he had never made any real sacrifice for principle, and yet had succeeded in establishing and maintaining a reputation for pronounced and even courageous Liberalism. Of course to play such a part required considerable diplomacy, and even *finesse*, and this Ernest was as quick to discover as he was sure to despise. In his own nature there was not a trace of this. He was guileless, transparent, outspoken to a fault, for he was apt to speak before he had taken time to mature his thought, still less to consider the expediency of giving it expression under the particular circumstances and in the special form in which it was clothed. With all the unsuspecting confidence of youth he expected the same in others, and in his own father had been accustomed to find it. Mr. Baring had not the touch of a trimmer in him. He had not, indeed, that undoubting faith or that unquenchable ardour which were so attractive in his son, but he had little of that coldest but most respectable of all the virtues, so falsely named prudence. "I hate your prudent men," was one of his frequent expressions, and certainly his life was in strict keeping with this sentiment. When duty called him he never stopped to

calculate what the consequences to himself might be, but straightway girded himself to obey the summons. Ernest had been deeply impressed with this, and he was therefore the less prepared to make allowances for the policy by which it was soon clear to him that Mr. Winder shaped his conduct. Strong in assertions of abstract principle, and ready also to take active and prominent part in political movements which had attained a certain respectability, from all action, even in carrying out his own views, which was likely to provoke fierce local controversy, and pretty sure to endanger or compromise his social influence, he shrank with a nervous sensitiveness. For the honours of leadership, when leadership had become a position to be envied and sought, he was always ready, but its responsibilities and difficulties, when it seemed to be only the lead of a forlorn hope, he was content to leave to others. Such men are not uncommon, even among those who are regarded as good soldiers in the army of progress. Those who are familiar with the story of our great political conflicts would not find any difficulty in singling out a number of men who are always in at the shouting, though it would be hard to point to any service they ever rendered in the battle. They love to be on the crest of the wave, but if the unfortunate vessel happens to be labouring in the trough of the sea, they leave to others the task of steering it into calmer waters, contenting themselves with watching their efforts from the shore, perhaps indulging meanwhile in severe criticisms on their folly in attempting such dangerous navigation.

As it was in political, so was it in theological and ecclesiastical questions. Despite the strength of his Nonconformity, Mr. Winder had a growing aversion to any aggressive action against the Establishment. No one would declaim in stronger terms in favour of Nonconformist liberty, and in vindication of the abstract principle of religious equality, but he was marvellously ingenious in finding excuses for abstaining from any proceedings which were likely to grieve his Church friends. These friends had increased in number as he had risen in wealth

and influence, and as they became more courteous and attentive he became more doubtful as to the wisdom of saying or doing anything which might be offensive to them. "It was very pleasant," he observed to a friend, "to hear the kind words spoken of himself and his school by the Archdeacon," who was also the vicar of the parish. Those kind words did more for the Church than a great many orations of Church defenders could have accomplished. They led Mr. Winder quietly to determine—and though his resolution never took actual shape to his own mind, it was persistently acted upon—not to allow any light cause to move him to stand in opposition to so gracious an ecclesiastic. To suppose that Mr. Winder was a time-server would be to do him great injustice. In reality he was not much worse, if worse at all, than a great number of people who would repudiate any idea of sacrificing principle for the sake of selfish considerations, but who do it nevertheless. The sacrifice does not amount to an actual surrender of principle, or possibly to a surrender at all, but only to a very careful estimate of the fitness of times and seasons for asserting it. They are Opportunists, and so much is necessary to make it expedient that all difficulties shall be faced in the vindication of right, that the convenient season never comes. The misfortune is that these are the very men who take the position of leaders, and when the hour for conflict comes they will not lead. Our ecclesiastical advance has been due to the rank and file.

In theology Mr. Winder was esteemed strictly orthodox even by the Calvinistic circle into which he had been thrown. Yet there were few men who chafed more under the ignorant presumption, the uncharitable judgment, the prejudiced and unreasoning dogmatism of his associates. Though he was not an accomplished Greek scholar he could read his New Testament with considerable ease, and had found no little pleasure in studying some of the works of modern Biblical critics, and his mind had been strongly impressed by their influence. Especially did he secretly revolt against the intolerable tyranny of a class who profess to be the expositors of orthodoxy and to speak in the

name of the fathers, and so to impose upon the church some favourite notions of their own not always very consistent with each other, nor carefully defined by themselves, as the tests of their Christian character. But these views he kept within his own borders. In private talks with Ernest he would give expression to some of his secret thoughts, and indeed express them with all the more force and intensity because of the restraint which he was accustomed to put upon himself generally. He was tempted to say much more than he meant when he gave the reins to his tongue on these grave subjects, because of the stern resolve with which he was wont to hold it fast with bit and bridle. He was generally esteemed a very paladin of the faith, or rather, it should be said, of the old traditions of the faith. To a certain extent his reputation was deserved, though it is tolerably certain that had he been better understood by many of his old acquaintance he would have been regarded as approaching perilously near to heresy. There was, in truth, no more reverent and devout reader of the Bible in the church of which he was a leading member. He was familiar with its contents, full of profound admiration for its literary beauties, and beyond this he cherished also a spirit of sincere faith in its teachings, and sought to submit himself entirely to its guidance. But he read it intelligently, was not content to build up doctrinal beliefs on isolated texts possibly of doubtful interpretation without regard to the general teaching of Scripture; endeavoured to look at the various books in their real character, not in that which had been assigned to them in extravagant theories of their inspiration. It was not enough for him that a certain particular text was to be found within the four corners of the Bible for him to accept it as the word of God, and to take it as determining some difficult question of theology regardless of what other words might say. He exercised the right to inquire as to the person by whom, the time when, and the conditions under which it was written, whether it claimed to be a word from God, or whether it was more than a record of the utterance of some fallible man. All this seems very simple, but it is very

contrary to the practice of a school some of whom will even quote such an expression as, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath he will give for his life," as though it were a piece of Biblical teaching, so raising a cynical sneer of Satan's into a word of inspired wisdom because it happens to be found in one of the sacred books. Mr. Winder was too humble a believer to treat the Bible after this fashion. It was to him not a fetish, but a living guide, and his concern was to understand its teachings. But it is not to be doubted that some of his talk with Ernest would have greatly shocked many of the slavish worshippers of the letter by whom he was surrounded.

As for Ernest, he could not understand a reserve which made him doubt the thoroughness and even sincerity of his chief. At first he found a great pleasure in listening to talk with which he was so entirely in sympathy, but when he found Winder unwilling to encounter the prejudices of his class by venturing to question their extreme ideas, he was secretly indignant at what seemed to him cowardly infidelity to truth. For himself he was inclined to regard the other as only too Conservative, stopping short of conclusions which he ought to have accepted. All too eager himself to accept any specious novelty, and attracted to it all the more if it were specially audacious, he could hardly understand the hesitation of one who had been trained under very different influences, and whom age and experience had made much more cautious. But when he found Winder reluctant to express even these more moderate views, and content to listen in silence, which was taken as acquiescence, to a talk which he knew must be most distasteful to him and opposed to all his deepest convictions, his feelings assumed a different character. With the ingenuous and fearless but also somewhat unreflecting spirit of a young man, he held that in order to be honest, a man ought to say out all that he has in his mind whenever opportunity presented itself; and as Mr. Winder was more diplomatic, he could not, in his own thoughts, acquit him of dishonesty.

Misunderstanding between men standing in such rela-

tion to each other was inevitable, and the only question was as to when it would lead to open rupture. There is something to be said on behalf of both. Winder was tempted to be too diplomatic, or to speak more euphemistically, too prudent; Ernest was certainly in danger of being too rash and inconsiderate. Younger men find it extremely hard to comprehend the caution of older men under such circumstances, and they, in their turn, are sure to be too severe upon an impetuosity which, after all, has much in it that is noble and chivalrous. In truth, each is so offended by the faults of the other, that he fails to discern, or, at all events, to acknowledge, his better points. In the present case, for example, Ernest was unable to do justice to the nobler motives by which Winder was influenced. He saw so much that looked to him like time-serving, that he leaped hastily to the conclusion that there was nothing else. But there were other and better sentiments. The man thought not only of his own position, but of the effect on weaker minds of anything which had a tendency to unsettle their faith. Very probably he was too anxious about such consequences; that in this very care there was an element of unfaith; that he was governed too much by considerations of policy and was afraid to trust the defence of the truth to God Himself. The error is not uncommon, and is sure to have dangerous consequences. The bolder and nobler course of action is also the safer one. It is necessary, however, that a man be fully persuaded in his own mind, and that he should be able to give good reason for the faith that is in him, before he venture to place himself in opposition to the accepted views of the vast majority of Christian men.

For that majority, it must be confessed, is not very tolerant of such opposition. It is simply amazing to note the small differences which are treated by numbers as grave heresies, and their authors or supporters dealt with accordingly. The result has been mischievous in every respect. Shameless injustice has been done to numbers of true Christians whose only offence was that they had exercised their own judgment, and dissented from

traditional opinion ; the majority who adhered to it have been strengthened in dogmatism and bigotry ; the rule of the weaker brother has been established in the Church, and has become a tyranny, bent on crushing out all independence ; and, worst of all, the cause of truth has been seriously injured. It is not only that progress has been arrested, but what is worse, members have been trained in the profession of opinions which they have never examined, and beliefs which they have never sought to realize, perhaps not even to understand. The spectacle of a congregation, especially if it be a fashionable congregation, reciting the Athanasian Creed, is one of the saddest which a thoughtful man can contemplate. The nodding of the feathers in the bonnets of ladies of Society as, with devoutest air, they bow assent to propositions which the most subtle intellect would find it difficult to understand, and anathemas from from which any true heart would instinctively recoil. Perhaps the thoughtless devotees who in the morning consign all who do not accept the "Catholic faith," which they themselves would find it hard to explain, to eternal death, may, before the day is past, be flitting gaily through the circles of fashion. They may excuse themselves on the plea that this is the established form of the Church ; and that some of their teachers have done their utmost to emasculate its meaning. But the plea is, if possible, even sadder than the offence, as indicating a more entire misconception of all that belief means. Dissenters have not their Athanasian Creed—happily have nothing even approaching to it ; but, unfortunately, they are not free from the evil of which we are speaking. There are current ideas which a man is expected to accept, and if he dare to challenge them he is in danger of being called in question by men as fallible as himself, and he is pronounced unsound in the faith, even though his life shows that he has the spirit of Christ, while his words bear true and faithful testimony to the gospel. There is nothing more vague than this Church opinion, and therefore there is nothing more difficult to confront and defy. The man who does it needs moral courage, clear perception, and, above all, a deep spiritual

sympathy, which alone may do something towards disarming suspicion.

It is not wonderful that a young man of Ernest's calibre did not perceive this. He was keenly alive to the evils which, as he thought, had arisen from ideas which he regarded as nothing better than mere superstition, and he held that the best way of meeting them was open and uncompromising resistance. He was intolerant of the weaknesses of others, and attributed the greater patience of Winder to purely selfish considerations. The feeling was all the stronger because he had expected and hoped for something so different. The first serious encounter between the two arose out of a controversy commenced by a violent attack upon the Free Churches by one of the clergy. The archdeacon was a man of peace, a firm believer in the wisdom of letting sleeping dogs lie, too much a gentleman to treat Dissenting ministers with the supercilious insolence in which others of his order love to indulge, and too much also of a Christian to deny the value of their Christian service simply because they did not follow with him. His liberality was not an act of condescension, calculated rather to offend than to conciliate ; it was the product of a genuine Christian charity, and it won for him an influence among Dissenters which would have been unattainable by a man of sacerdotal pretensions and exclusive views. He was not the less a decided Churchman, because he thought that even the interests of the Church itself would be better served by a policy at harmony with the spirit of the gospel than by one of a more arrogant kind.

The vicar of the other church was of a very different stamp. He had begun his ministerial career in one of the Dissenting communities—as he flitted from one to another, we are not able to say which. Having, however, tried more than one, and being everywhere a conspicuous failure, it occurred to him that he might find a more secure and comfortable resting-place in the Established Church, among those whom he had startled his congregation by describing as “our more favoured brethren of the Na-

tional Church." It did not seem as though that Church or its rulers were particularly grateful for the valuable services which he transferred to them, since the only place they could assign him was a Peel district, with hard work and a very limited income. Of this, however, Mr. Burdett did not venture to complain publicly, though rumour had it that in private he spoke in no measured terms of the scant appreciation which he met. But this did not incline him to regard Dissent with more favour. On the contrary, he held that the taint of his former connection with it prejudiced him in the view of the authorities of the Church, and prevented his receiving that recognition of his claims which, in the most modest estimate of his merits, was only his reasonable due. There was first the *spretæ injuria formæ*—the strange blindness of Dissenters to his striking abilities, and, when added to this there came the still stranger insensibility of Churchmen, his self-love could only be soothed by attributing it to his previous flirtation with the hated Nonconformity. It was only natural that he should become a vehement champion of the State Church; or, to put it more exactly, a violent and irreconcilable assailant of Nonconformity. He wrote against it, he organized Church Defence Associations against it, he lost no opportunity of denouncing it, he travelled up and down the country to expose its iniquities.

Hitherto the one place in which he had not carried on the open warfare was his own town. Dissent was exceptionally strong in Melmerby, and he was unwilling to provoke it to a display of its power. But, beyond this, he found that the best Churchmen in the place, and especially the Rector, were indisposed to aggressive action. A cheery, kind-hearted, generous man, Archdeacon Norton was an example of the best type of Anglican clergymen. He was strongly attached to his Church, and prepared to resist Disestablishment *à outrance*, under the belief that a State Church was the proper national recognition of religion and made a provision for the religious teaching of poor and scattered populations in villages, and the crowded masses in the lower parts of large towns. But he was

fully alive to the strength of the Nonconformist objection, and at heart extremely disliked the relation in which it placed him to Dissenting ministers, whom he regarded, and never failed to treat, as Christian brethren. Instead of putting on airs of superiority and talking down to Mr. Bright in a tone of condescension apt to become very supercilious, he loved nothing better than a free and friendly chat in which, while each maintained his own position, the one learned proper respect for the convictions of the other. It would be little to say that the Archdeacon had more real sympathy with the Congregational minister than with the Vicar of St. Nicholas. He had too clear a perception of the real drift of opinion to suppose that the cause of the Establishment would ever be served by antiquarian arguments or appeals to vulgar sectarian passions, and he was desirous, if possible, to keep the town free from the sort of controversy in which Mr. Burdett was giving proof of the reality of his conversion, and, as he probably thought or hoped, earning a title to promotion. He did not like the man—his vulgar pretentiousness, his hard and unsympathetic temper, his rampant bigotry. He thought him vulgar and superficial, and was extremely unwilling to see the cause of the Church committed to such a defender. But Burdett was not willing to be thus held in check. He had made more than one attempt to secure a demonstration of the Churchmen in the town in support of the Establishment, and having been in each case thwarted by the passive opposition of the Rector, he resolved at last to take independent action, leaving others to unite with him or not at their own pleasure.

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#### NEW SCHEME OF EDUCATION.

##### *VIEWS OF THE DEPARTMENT.*

- 56,231. Have you any suggestion to make which would place the board schools and voluntary schools in a better

correlative position to each other?—I think that the question at last comes to this: Can any terms be suggested under which they can both share in the rate? I do not see that anything else can put them on a footing of financial equality.

56,232. That is just one of the most difficult questions that we have to deal with?—That is one of the most difficult questions with which any commission can have to deal.

56,233. And it is a question upon which we should very much like to hear any suggestions from yourself?—I think that it has some bearing upon the growth of the education grant. Board schools could be maintained absolutely without any education grant at all. The ratepayer is also a taxpayer, and if you rated him up to the full cost of a sufficient number of schools, so far as finance goes, you have the means of maintaining them. But, having the voluntary schools side by side with the rate schools, no Ministry, I imagine, would ever venture to give a grant to voluntary schools and to withhold it from the rate schools. That was very clearly shown in 1876. It was not the board schools that existed at that time that wanted increased grants so much as the voluntary schools, in order to keep them in existence. But the proportion of State aid to the voluntary schools having been once raised, the concession of it to the board schools inevitably followed. Looking at it only from the outside, it has a tendency, or may have a tendency, to work in this way. The board school is practically independent of the grant, or it might be so. If it got no grant at all, from any circumstances, for instance, if it did not fulfil the conditions of a grant, possible to remain but still remained a board school, it would be independent. The consequence is, that having this grant, as it were, over and above its legal compulsory funds, it is very much easier for a board to go in, for instance, for a free school, and say, "We do not want any fees." But a voluntary school is in a very different position from that. The board school has always got the unlimited rate to fall back upon, independent of every other source

whatever; the voluntary school has not got such a resource, and I think that the board school is a good deal encouraged in not making the most of its money by having this Parliamentary grant to the same extent (and I hold that to be inevitable) that the voluntary school has. In that way I think that the connection between the growth of the grant and the present system is somewhat marked.

56,234. Then if any aid is given at all by the State, so to speak, to voluntary schools, it must come out of the rate and not out of the public Treasury?—I have not worked out my own conclusions, and they might prove to be impracticable when I did come to work them out. But I have some idea like this in my mind, that supposing you had a system of local government established all over the country, one of the first things that you would have to consider would be this: Shall education be independent of and separate from the general local government? For instance, at this time the Poor-law, even in a municipal town, has its own organization distinct from the municipality. In the same way education, with a school board, even in a municipal town, has its organization distinct from the municipality. That would be one very important question, and would somewhat modify the result. But so far as I can make my own mind up on this very difficult question, instead of the Government having to deal, as it does now, with every individual school, making a separate grant to that school, and going into all the details of its government, I should like to arrive at some principle like this: To take in each district population as the basis, and to calculate at what cost per head of the population you can give a good elementary education. I should like then the State to make whatever contribution it thought was right to make, and I would have it make some, in order to retain the power of inspection, very much as it now does over the Poor-law and over the police, with which your lordship is familiar at the Home Office. I should like the State always to retain a certain contribution towards education. But I think that if you had population for the basis, and a limit of what you thought was the proper charge per child

for its education, all expense beyond that amount would be the look-out of the locality; but with relation to this standard charge I would have the State give a certain grant, and that grant I should like to be paid over to the local authority, the distribution of it being by the local authority subject to audit, and subject to inspection. If this could be worked out, then I should like to see some such modification of the 14th clause (I think it is) about catechisms in the Education Act of 1870 as would not make that a ground of difference between one school and another. That is, in idea, the scheme that I should be myself disposed to work towards.

56,235. Do you mean that the repeal of the Cowper-Temple clause should be applied to board schools?—At present no school can share in the rate, if I remember the clause rightly, which uses a catechism or formulary of any kind, and that I should certainly wish to modify under my scheme.

56,236. You, under your scheme, wish to diminish the amount given by the State and to throw more upon the rates?—I regard that as being a somewhat less important question than getting rid of the great mass of detail, and having such a simple intelligent principle to work upon—*e.g.*, if you ought to be able to educate a child satisfactorily in an elementary school for the sum  $x$ ; the grant would be  $x-y$ ;  $x$  being a constant quantity, and  $y$  whatever further sum the locality had to raise in order to make the education satisfactory. If you had these things before the public which everybody could understand, you would have made a very great step towards what I should call popularizing the support of education; for it is only experts now that understand the terms of aid to it.

56,237. Have you thought out in your plan about the local government as to the size of the districts; for instance, take a particular county, would you include the large towns in one great county?—All this is very much in the air now. I do not know what view the Government of the day might take as the basis of a local government scheme; but, speaking broadly, I should imagine that all

the municipal part of the country now only requires the powers of its governing bodies to be regulated and prescribed, and that there would be no interference, or little interference, with those areas which are now under municipalities. Then the question is as to the rest of the country that is not under municipalities. Whatever government you establish there, which would be more or less analogous to that municipal government, it might be proper to group two or more districts together for education, or it might be right to separate them; but I never would have, with any new localization, cross boundaries; every district should either be an unit, or it should lie within an unit, never within two units. I hold that to be cardinal.

56,238. Then there is one question more which I wish to ask you with regard to the education itself. Do you think that the education itself, as given in our elementary schools, exceeds what elementary education ought to be; does it aim too high?—There I speak with very great diffidence, and I can only give my own impression and opinion, but I do think it too high.

56,239. Do you think that it trenches upon the functions of secondary schools in some cases?—Yes, and on that point I should like to say one word while it is before the Commissioners. Perhaps that is the great reason against the extended syllabus in the elementary schools. The great want of this country at this moment is what, in the Duke of Newcastle's Commission, are called the third-class schools, the schools for the class that is immediately above the elementary schools, and is below the more expensive grammar schools. In the towns, that class is getting to a certain extent provided for by the day school system; but in the country the day school system is, from the distance, impracticable. You almost inevitably, if you are to educate the sons of the farmers, must have boarding-schools. Therefore it is of the utmost possible importance to spend no money that you do not need to spend upon the elementary schools, always remembering that you have got this plane of education above the elementary plane almost wholly unprovided for.

56,240. Would you propose that the State should give any assistance for that higher plane of education of which you speak?—Yes, for the same reason that I should propose that they should give it for the elementary education; but the great source that ought to be looked to for such education is a better application of endowments; and in any local government scheme I should certainly think that, so far as originating power went, very great liberty ought to be given to the local governing body to deal with endowments.

56,241. Do you mean endowments which might have been given for the education of the very poor?—That would be another question. If they were expressly given for the education of the poor, if it were quite certain that the founder meant by the poor what we mean by the poor now, the proper application of those endowments would be in aid of the rates.

56,242. The ratepayers become practically the paupers?—The ratepayer is the man that is entitled to have the benefit of all endowments that were left for elementary education. But I was rather thinking of the great mass of endowments for grammar schools, often in small sums in detail, but great in the aggregate, which are now scattered all over the country, and which, if they were concentrated in educational districts of reasonable area, would go far to provide this third-class school which is so greatly wanted, and especially in the country. I speak from my own knowledge when I say that a proper and suitable education for their children is completely out of the reach of the poorer classes of farmers. The wiser of them send their sons to the national parish school, because at much less cost they get a much better education than they could get at the boarding-schools that they could afford to send their sons to; but that is not altogether, in my opinion, a desirable state of things, because it is not desirable, in my opinion, that the master should be educated in the same school with the man.

56,243. Have you any opinion about the advantages of technical education?—The only fault that I have to find

with the promoters of technical education is that they always seem to me to fly a great deal too high. Technical education, so far as it means habituating boys to the use of tools, and enabling them to do all common operations themselves, and to understand them, is, I think, most important, and I would make it a part of every school curriculum.

56,244. You would include drawing?—Certainly, not artistic drawing, but freehand drawing in connection with the arts.

#### COMMENTS ON LORD LINGEN'S EVIDENCE.

1. The answers (56,231–56,244) give the views of Lord Lingén, formerly permanent head of the Education Department, but since 1869 till recently Permanent Secretary of the Treasury. His connection with education extended from 1847–1869, and therefore he has had nothing to do with the working of the Education Act of 1870, except in watching, with anxiety approaching alarm, the rapid and enormous growth in the annual grant from the Treasury for elementary schools. He admits that his attention has not been given, *except in a general way*, to the subject of education since 1870 (56,211).

2. Why should there be "*financial equality*," when there is equality in nothing else, except an approximate equality in efficiency as to the merest rudiments of elementary education? These denominational schools are managed and officered, in the exclusive interests of some church, generally by the autocratic will of the clergyman or priest, with only nominal and ostensible managers, none of them chosen by the parents or the ratepayers, and seldom even by the parish or congregation. The whole conditions of their existence and government are the opposite of popular representative institutions such as Board schools.

3. Most of Lord Lingén's proposals are made in the interests of the Treasury and economy, as well as of Denominational schools. He is, as a surviving head of the old *régime*, alarmed at the growth of the grant, and would

fix the annual amount to say 15s. or 16s., never more than one-half of local contributions; he would personally prefer one-third (see 56,347).

4. Yes, and Denominational schools can be maintained, and often are so, *without any voluntary subscriptions*: and, in some cases, even a saving is effected, in favour of the Sunday schools conducted on the premises. And if it be alleged this is proof of the greater economy of denominational managers, we reply, it is also largely due to the greater leniency of inspectors towards voluntary schools in sanctioning buildings, apparatus, playgrounds, staff, and work, which would not be allowed in Board schools.

5. Here is a frank confession: It is these so-called *voluntary* schools which are for ever pulling at the national purse-strings *to keep them in existence*; as if that were a national or educational necessity. Why should they be kept in existence? Not for elementary education, because it is all but universally admitted that this, which is all that the State should concern itself about, would be better secured by undenominational Board schools, under popular and representative government. They are kept in existence to promulgate the distinctive religious beliefs of different churches, and to perpetuate the preponderant influence, if not supremacy, of the clergymen or priests in the management. And they are allowed to exist, in spite of their exclusive and sectarian management, because to a considerable extent they save the ratepayers the expense of a Board.

6. Nominally "unlimited," but the ratepayers, vigilant and careful, will very soon punish and dismiss an extravagant Board; and there is more danger of their starving their schools than of supplying them with a plethora of wealth.

7. Possibly, but the Denominational schools are also "encouraged" in "not making the most" of their voluntary subscribers, by having so large a parliamentary grant, that with that and the fees (which in many cases ought to be less), the schools are virtually self-sustaining.

8. In a subsequent answer his lordship admits the

extreme difficulty of his scheme, but thinks it is "not past human ingenuity." He is so utterly given over to denominationalism, that he has no knowledge, or no adequate conception, of the deep and widespread antagonism to it.

9. A good deal may be said in favour of this scheme in the interests both of economy and education, provided always that the State lays down sufficiently clear and liberal lines upon which the local Boards shall administer the grant, and always strictly forbid the payment of public compulsory rates to schools in the management of which the ratepayers have no effective voice.

It would be manifestly unfair "to take in each district population as the basis," unless the districts were very large, or so arranged as to group rich and poor together. Otherwise, in those districts where the poor largely predominate, and where the children attending elementary schools would be considerably above the average (in proportion to population), and where also the ratepayers are mainly poor, the local rate would have to be much higher than in districts inhabited by wealthy and well-to-do ratepayers, who would have much fewer children to educate and a larger share of State money to help them. A basis of "average attendance" would be much more equitable than that of population.

10. *Audit and inspection* are all very well, and absolutely necessary. But what do these involve? Do they simply secure an accurate statement of what sums the local body has expended, or do they examine and restrict the lines or principle upon which payments are to be made to different schools? Which body, the State or the local authority, has the full and final authority to determine the schools to be supported, and the proportion of rate to be voted to each? Judging from subsequent answers, Lord Lingan would leave almost plenary power in the hands of the local body. "The local authority would have to make *its own terms*" with the Voluntary schools (56,311). But he is mercifully considerate. "I would not put them at the mercy of the local authority in the sense of leaving everything within Voluntary schools at the disposal of the local authority.

The 14th clause, which now acts as a bar upon the Voluntary schools, I should remove, and *I should not allow the local authority to interfere with anything that that clause now covers*" (56,314). "There are certain restrictions which you would probably, for various reasons and in various directions, have to impose upon the local authority, but I still come back to this point, *that the fewer restrictions the better*" (56,317). From these and other answers, his lordship appears to be a Home Ruler on the education question, and would make each municipality and district an autonomous state, subject only in the most limited and lenient way to the supervision or control of Imperial Parliament. He would like the Denominational schools to have more popular management, if they could be *persuaded* to see it, but certainly not to be compelled (56,449).

11. This is the "one thing needful" about which Lord Lingen is absolutely and resolutely certain. And this is the one crucial innovation which all earnest Nonconformists and good Liberals must sternly resist, even unto the endurance of pains and penalties in refusing to pay rates to support Church and Roman Catholic schools managed by the priesthood of those churches, and in which their catechisms and formularies, with all their pestilent errors, are taught, not only to their own children, but to the children of others who may be too weak or poor to claim with safety the protection of the Conscience Clause. If education is handed over to local bodies, this is the one restriction which should be insisted upon by the State: the 14th clause shall stand and shall be rigidly carried out. We maintain that the abrogation of the 14th clause would be a gross violation of the fundamental principle of the Act of 1870. The 25th clause (about granting fees to children attending denominational schools from the rates), which was obnoxious to Nonconformists and repealed, was not nearly so important as this 14th. We have now the strongest objections to paying money, even from the taxes, for denominational teaching; but the proposal to apply local rates for this sectarian purpose ought to rouse the whole nation to the extreme gravity of the crisis. Dis-

senters, among others, will resist it to the death. It would be infinitely worse than the old *Church Rate* for churches and churchyards, in the management of which there was some semblance at least of representative action in vestry meetings. We should have, if this proposal were adopted, a hundred or two of little provincial States throughout England in each of which there would be one or more churches established in schools, and every second or third year there would be most violent and heated discussions as to the juvenile Church establishment within their borders. In every election of local authorities the drums ecclesiastic would be beaten with fury, and bitterness, intolerable and destructive of good government and of good citizenship, would be imported into every contest. Lord Lingen has great faith that money considerations would settle all such difficulties, allay all bitterness, and throw so much oil on the troubled waters, as would produce quite a millenial calm in the otherwise excited community.

12. He thinks that the ratepayers would be so anxious to save their money and to keep the rates low, they would be extremely kind, not to say generous, to the denominational schools, and would wink at sectarian teaching and close clerical management, searing and burdening their conscience to save their pockets. On the other hand, the managers of denominational schools would be so anxious to obtain a good share of the rates, that they would be very conciliatory in their dealings with the ratepayers and the Board, and, in many cases, would modify their exclusiveness and lower their pretensions by introducing some slender figment of popular management, and occasionally making room on their staff for a pupil-teacher whose father was a pious Dissenter—political Dissenters being, of course, carefully excluded from the list of managers and teachers ! *Credat Judæus!* We have heard of “the love of money” being the “root of all evil,” but we imagine it is new to most of us that this old root is capable of producing in these provincial gardens henceforth the peaceable fruits of good and quiet living. Judging from the questions of Canon Gregory, we infer that his party will suffer any-

thing rather than any interference in the management of their schools, and we can assure him and his clerical coadjutors that we will not tolerate the application of compulsory rates to juvenile Church establishments.

13. This question of the size and boundary of districts will depend very much upon the local government measure which the Parliament passes. In any case it is most desirable that the districts should be sufficiently large to group rich and poor together, to prevent poor, benighted, selfish ratepayers from starving education within their areas, to permit of several poor and very inefficient schools being united in one central and thoroughly good institution, and, specially, to secure at least, within reasonable distance of every child, a school free from offensive sectarian teaching.

14. His lordship, with some good notions, is withal at heart an old-fashioned Tory. Afraid of giving the poor children too good an education, he would be satisfied with the three R's (56,334). Indeed he strenuously maintains that the Government grant should only recognize and pay for these, leaving local authorities to extend the syllabus as they please if they will pay for it (56,339). Whereas we maintain that the education given in the majority of English elementary schools is too low, not only inferior to what is given in France, Germany, and Switzerland now, but even to what was given in the parochial schools of Scotland forty years ago.

15. No great reason, your lordship, but great prejudice and narrow-mindedness. For the teachers' sake, as well as for the many clever children amongst the millions in attendance, it is most desirable that their minds should have some freer and higher exercise than the weary, monotonous treadmill of the three R's.

16. These are damaging admissions as to the low estate of many of the country denominational schools. There is no reason—except the supposed necessity of *keeping in existence* small badly-staffed, badly-managed sectarian schools—why there should not be in every parish, or larger area, a first-class school teaching elementary and specific

subjects in such a *proper and suitable* way that farmers' sons need not go to a boarding-school, except perhaps for a year to give finish and polish. Such an education may be had now in many Board schools, and, but for this wretched denominationalism, similar privileges would be extended to rural districts at very little more expense, without in the slightest degree injuring any religious sect.

17. This is another antiquated Tory notion which needs to be swept away. The experience of America and Scotland proves that the more the children of different classes and different sects mingle together in the schools of the country, the better for education and for all classes, perhaps not for the sects.

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#### THE LATE JAMES SPICER, ESQ.

THE gathering at the funeral of Mr. James Spicer was a remarkable evidence of the confidence and affection which he had inspired. On a cold and bitter January day numbers of busy men had left their studies or counting houses and travelled down to the distant suburb for the purpose of showing their regard for one with whom they had worked, and whom they had learned heartily to respect. There were personal friends, commercial friends, political friends, and, above all, religious friends, for most of the leading Congregationalists of London were present, and some, like Mr. Henry Lee, from distant parts of the country. Yet Mr. Spicer had not occupied such a place in public life as would have led the ordinary observer to expect so striking a demonstration. His voice was seldom heard in large assemblies, and the influence which he had secured was due to character, and honest, steady, faithful service. He was a man strong in faith and abundant in good works, and he was honoured for his consistency, his loyalty to Christ, his unstinted liberality, his untiring labour.

It is not our purpose to give even an outline of his

biography, but simply to note one or two points in his Christian character which stood out conspicuously, and which are specially worthy of emulation. He was known to the world as an active, energetic, and prosperous man of business, but it is, as he was known to the Church, as a devout, prayerful, earnest Christian, that we have to deal with him. It is very hard for those who see others in business to understand anything of their inner and secret life. They know them as active, watchful, pushing, and energetic; but they do not know, and probably would find it hard to understand, those deep and real spiritual experiences which make them what they are in their closets, in their families, or in the ministry of faith and love in the Church of Christ. Mr. Spicer was a man who early gave himself to Christ, and whose aim it was to fashion his life according to the will of Christ. He belonged to a generation which is rapidly passing away. Without instituting invidious comparison, or yielding at all to the pessimism supposed to be characteristic of age, we may feel anxious as to how far the new generation will be equal to its predecessors. This we know, that there are many graces that it neglects which will have to be cultivated, many duties it is prone to forget which will have to be discharged; or, to put it in another form, there must be very much of other virtue and other service in which the last generation was defective as a compensation for qualities which are lacking at present, if the coming generation is to take its place, in the history of the Church, side by side with the fathers who are passing away. To that race Mr. Spicer belonged, and he was a fine specimen of the class. Some would say he was narrow, but so they would say of all of us. In their judgment every one is narrow who does not admit that it is of no importance what a man believes, or whether he believes anything at all. Too much concession has been made to that school; we can make no concession on this point — the sovereign and supreme claims of Christ, Redeemer and Lord.

Mr. Spicer's aim in life was to prove himself a faithful servant of that Divine Master. Trusting to His guid-

ance, desirous to do His will, acknowledging God in all his ways, he was pre-eminently a man of prayer. Prayer was not with him a function nor a form, nor a semblance of service, but was a deep reality and a guiding force. He believed in referring every difficulty to God, in sanctifying every part, even of his business life, by the Word of God and prayer. When he entered on his business it was with prayer, and there was not a successive stage of it into which prayer did not enter in as an important factor in the formation of his judgment. It has been our pleasure, on more than one occasion, to take part in a service that has been annually held in his warehouse at the beginning of his business year. It was his plan, carried out by his sons and partners, to gather all those who were employed in the business together, to ask a friend to preside and to address them, and to spend a short time, before beginning another year, in united prayer. There came afterwards the pleasant treat to the employés, the journey down to Woodford, and the interchange of kindly fellowship; but that had been preceded by what was infinitely more important, this gathering together at the throne of Divine mercy, in which, before his working people, his friends and associates, his helpers—for all classes were gathered in—he made this confession, that it was to the Lord that they owed all their prosperity, and to Him they looked for the grace by which that prosperity should be sanctified. His piety took other and more practical shape. It led him to care for his employés, and to make them sharers in his prosperity, by instituting a fund for their benefit.

There are two points in his life which deserve special notice. He was specially careful in the management of his home and the training of his family. Is it too much to say that it is in the home, above all other places, that the signs of weakness are most apparent at present. There are not a few who maintain their personal godliness, but forget their family religion. They seem unconscious of the solemn responsibility resting on them as parents, and in fact allow their children to rule the home. Of such training there can be but one issue. Mr. Spicer pursued a

different course ; he trained his children for Christ, and he trained them for the church, of which he was an attached and devoted member. Blessed with a partner who was in perfect sympathy with him, and whose remarkable wisdom, grace, and gentleness, intensified his force and multiplied his influence, he was saved from that most miserable of all conditions, a divided empire in his own household. The influence of Christian principle, manifested both in father and mother, was felt in the children. His reward was that they were not scattered to and fro on the face of the ecclesiastical world, with some outside the Church altogether, but that they are serving God as their father served Him before them. Together they form a noble group of devoted men and women, for whose works we as Congregationalists must give God thanks.

The second point we note is his loyal devotion to his church, or rather to the whole body of Congregational Churches. He took large views of what our churches should be. It was not enough for him that the church, of which he was a deacon, prospered. He did not indulge in that universal benevolence which leads some men to go wandering up and down among the churches with no obvious advantage to themselves or others, and to the serious injury of the community which has honoured them by giving them official position. His first care was for home, but while interested first in the prosperity of the church of which for a long series of years he was a deacon, he did not allow his sympathies to be narrowed, or his efforts confined to it. Trained in the principles and traditions of Congregationalism, he was intensely desirous to see its influence maintained, and its power extended both at home and abroad. He never assumed the tone of the "superior person" or the "candid friend," but was chivalrous in his attachment to the denomination in which he held so honourable a position. No one ever heard from him the wail of discontent, the gloomy prediction of pessimism, or the cavil of an ungenerous criticism. If he saw weaknesses and faults, he set to work to remove them, instead of publishing them in the streets of Ascalon, and giving

the enemy cause to triumph. His public services, especially in the Congregational Union of England and Wales, and in the Colonial Missionary Society, are known, though probably few understand their full extent. But there were private services, unknown beyond a comparatively limited circle, which were not less valuable.

Perhaps not the least remarkable feature in his character was the extent to which he entered into the spirit of the younger generation, and was full of earnest sympathy with progress. This was largely due, doubtless, to his sons, whose devotion to the work of Christ was one of his great joys. He had influenced them in their early days, and was in his turn influenced by them to an extent which he hardly understood. It may be said without any qualification that Congregationalism had no more loyal son ; and at a time when robustness of principle seems to be at a discount in so many quarters, and a maudlin sentimentalism is substituted for it, too high honour can hardly be paid to such a quality. Men need not be less Catholic in spirit, or less generous in their judgments of other systems and their adherents, because they are faithful to their own conscientious convictions, and concentrate their efforts on the church which, in their view, is most conformed to the mind of Christ. The unsectarianism which is so popular tends to undermine definite convictions altogether. It claims to be peculiarly devoted to what it calls the simple gospel. In reality its influence, though all unseen by its best representatives, is in the contrary direction. The Lord's teaching applies to doctrine as well as to practice. He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much, and he that is unrighteous in a little is unrighteous also in much." If earnest Christians begin by saying that church principles are of no importance, there will be numbers ready to take advantage of their example and apply the same law to doctrines which we esteem of priceless importance. It must be added that Congregationalists are the only people who make [a vain boast of this unsectarianism. Churchmen may have it on their lips, but it is always with the well-understood reservation on behalf of their Church. We

have no love for exclusiveness or bigotry, we would cultivate breadth of sympathy to the fullest extent, compatible with Christian loyalty, but if we are to maintain the principles we love we must honour them by true and devoted service. Our work can never be done by compromise or half-heartedness. Mr. Spicer was an admirable illustration of that concentration of effort which is one great secret of power. We do not pretend that he was faultless. Strong men must have the defects of their high qualities, and doubtless he had his. Happily, our business here is to speak of only those high qualities which stood so conspicuous in him, and while they endeared him to those who knew him most intimately, won for him the regard of all who are capable of appreciating fidelity to principle and earnestness in working out a high ideal of duty.

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#### THE CASE AGAINST COERCION.

THE changed aspects of the Irish question, owing to the full development of the Coercion policy, suggest that the time has come for the review of the situation, especially by those who were staggered and almost bewildered by Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule proposals, and therefore either assumed a position of neutrality, or identified themselves with what is called the great "Unionist," but what has proved to be the old Tory, party under another name. Among these is a section of Nonconformists, not numerically strong, nor in general distinguished by their activity on behalf of our ecclesiastical or political principles, but commanding influence by their character and position, and, in some cases, by their proved fidelity to Liberalism and their services on its behalf. Nonconformists, indeed, who have become "Unionists," especially if they have become active members of the Confederation, are for the most part men who prided themselves on their moderate views, and had probably been somewhat restive under the "unauthorized

programme" of 1885, and the speeches in which it was advocated by Mr. Chamberlain. It would, however, be foolish, and worse than foolish, to deny that there are others, whose loyalty to Liberalism even of an advanced type is beyond all question, who for the last two years have stood aloof from their old party, and, in some cases, have offered it an active resistance. That they have acted under an overwhelming sense of political duty is not to be doubted, even by those who find it most difficult to follow their line of reasoning. We do not find it easy to understand the working of a conscience which constrains a man who believes in the right of a people to govern themselves, to sacrifice every political object beside in order that he may keep Ireland in an unwilling union with England. But we are forced to admit that there are intelligent men who take this view conscientiously, and all that remains for us is to show our respect for their conscientiousness by employing all the argument we can command to convince them that they are mistaken. The present seems a favourable opportunity for an appeal to their understanding. The experience of the last eighteen months must have sufficed to dispel a good many illusions, as well as to throw light upon some doubtful points in the controversy, and it may be hoped that if we have not as yet reached full agreement, still there may be more approach to it.

Let it be said at the outset that we deal only with those whose Liberalism is a reality, not a mere tradition or a name. From those to whom this Irish question has only afforded an occasion for severing a connection which has for some time past been growingly distasteful to them, there is nothing to hope. It is only in accordance with all former precedents, and, in truth, it is in the nature of things that so great a democratic measure as the last reform bill should be followed by a secession from the party of progress. Certain it is that the work of Liberalism in the future, apart altogether from this Irish question, will need men of fixed principles and robust determination. It will not be done, for example, by men who have reached that conviction of

the impartiality of the House of Lords in dealing with the question of Irish law which has commended itself in these latter days to the statesman who, of all others, has dealt the heaviest blows to the selfishness of the class whom his colleague has so truly and tersely described as "those who toil not neither do they spin." It is painful to think that the battle in this country ever threatens to be more and more that of the classes against the masses. Hitherto our progress has been sure—"our freedom broadened slowly down from precedent to precedent"—because the line of cleavage has run through society, and the cause of liberty has had its friends and champions in all classes. An evil day will it be for the country when this ceases to be, but he must be short-sighted indeed, who does not observe the tendencies working in this direction. It rests with Non-conformists, beyond any other section of the Liberal party, to supply a counteracting force. Of course, if there are among them those who are so alarmed by the democratic advance, that they think it necessary and right to ally themselves with the party of resistance, we must regretfully accept their decision. We believe them mistaken, even from their own standpoint, since their secession withdraws a moderating influence where it might have some effect, and only helps to strengthen forces whose increased violence is a source of danger to the very interests they are employed to defend. There is no good, however, in remonstrance which is pretty sure to be futile. It is not to those who scent danger in every suggestion of progress that appeal can be addressed with any hope of advantage, but to those who have an unflinching faith in liberty and in righteousness—the men whose separation from us has been restricted to differences on the Irish question only, and who, even in that, have regarded with undisguised alarm the action of the Unionist leaders—the men who have never for a moment ceased to be Radicals at heart, and who, while unprepared to concede the Irish demands in full, are beginning to feel that even they would be preferable to the continuance of the present unhappy political situation.

Between men of this type and the more moderate though

strongly pronounced Liberals who regard with unconcealed aversion the position which Mr. Labouchere and others of similar spirit are taking in the party, and who, though they are ready to do justice to Ireland, are not willing to be classed among Mr. Parnell's followers, and believe that the true attitude of English Liberals is that of friendly allies, there are many points of sympathy. We, at all events, ought so far to understand each other, as to believe that on both sides there is an honest desire to do what is right. They know us well enough to be assured that we have no secret sympathies with wild revolutionary projects, no desire for a separation between England and Ireland, no disposition to regard with indifference the rights and liberties of Irish Protestants. They have had too much experience of our independence to give heed to the suggestion that we have been deceived by the glamour of a great name. They cannot have forgotten that we opposed Mr. Gladstone when we believed him to be wrong, and they may be assured, therefore, that we should not follow him now if we did not believe him to be right. On the other hand, we do not brand them as traitors to Liberalism, but believe that they are just as anxious to deal righteously with Ireland as we are ourselves. It may be that even with these many points of accord we may still be unable to reach perfect agreement, but even if so it will be a distinct gain if we are able exactly to measure the differences which unhappily separate us, and seek to cultivate a spirit which may render the task of re-union more easy when happier days shall come.

The first point that the story of the year has demonstrated is that the only alternative to a policy which shall conciliate the people of Ireland by satisfying their legitimate aspirations for self-government is Coercion. Never had an English Minister a better opportunity of trying some intermediate course, if such was to be found, than had Lord Salisbury when he took office last year. His friends are never weary of reminding us that he had received a mandate from the constituencies to preserve the Union intact. They forget to add that,

combined with that, was a distinct understanding that this should be done by the steady pursuit of a policy which should make the Irish people content. This was, however, the general sentiment of the "Unionist" party, and had the Tory Government acted under its influence, and had they fulfilled the pledges which were so lavishly given upon the hustings, by introducing some broad and generous measures of reform, they would have been carried with enthusiasm, and we should at least have seen the result of another experiment at conciliation. But the attempt was not made, and perhaps it is not too much to say that it could not have been made. The Irish landlords prevented it in the House of Lords, and the Ulster members—those interesting innocents on behalf of whom so much needless sympathy has been evoked—were equally impracticable in the House of Commons. A Government resting on the support of the Duke of Argyle and Colonel Saunderson could not afford to be conciliatory, even had Lord Salisbury himself been so inclined. But although his Lordship did coquet with Home Rule at Newport, and even go so far as to allow Lord Carnarvon to have a confidential communication with Mr. Parnell,\* there is no reason to suppose that he had ever abated one iota of his aristocratic belief that Ireland ought to be governed in the interests of the landlords and at their pleasure. Hence, from the hour of the Unionist victory we have heard nothing of conciliation. It is hardly necessary to recite the declarations of the General Election against Coercion. The Tory party was simply pledged up to the hilt, and it has chosen to treat those pledges as idle words. A more shameless piece of political immorality has not often been witnessed, and it has made a deeper impression upon the intelligence and conscience of the people than those who are implicated in it are able as yet fully to realize.

The plea that the Crimes Bill was intended only to

\* We do not think it necessary to discuss the statements and counter statements on this subject. Amid all the conflict of testimony the points stated in the text are sufficiently established.

prevent crime and outrage is too hollow to deceive any but those who wish to be deceived. Experience has more than justified the contention of those who, in the discussion of the Bill, insisted that it was meant to be a weapon of political warfare. The Government believe that agitation is the great cause of trouble in Ireland, and they are resolved to put it down. The mode in which the policy was introduced to the country was as significant as the policy itself. First, we had *The Times* issuing wholesale accusations against the Irish members. The reason was obvious. It was not only to injure Mr. Gladstone by representing him as allied with assassins and ruffians, but to rouse all the strongest feelings of the English heart against the representatives of the Irish people, and so to interpose a new obstacle to the realization of their hopes. The publication of these atrocious charges so far did its work that it helped to pass an Act for which there was not, in truth, even a decent pretext. The Act of 1887 has been compared with that passed by Mr. Gladstone's ministry in 1882, but the one was directed against a state of lawlessness and violence which had culminated in the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish, whereas for the latter the Minister was not able to produce even the shadow of a case. *The Times* by its pamphlet, followed by its atrocious charges against Mr. Parnell, helped to create the passion, but for which even this Parliament might have hesitated to pass so repressive a measure.

The key-note to the whole policy was one of defiance to Ireland. The English people were taught to look upon the chosen leaders of Ireland as conspirators, if not murderers, and any measure was supposed justifiable for their suppression. "Law must be maintained" was the cry. Alas! it is possible there may be as much lawlessness in defence of law and order as there has sometimes been injustice and tyranny perpetrated in the name of liberty. In the present case the passion which has been evoked in the name of order, and the pitiless and almost unscrupulous determination sometimes shown by those from whom it might have been least expected, have been very surprising. "Nothing,"

said a distinguished member of Parliament in conversation with ourselves, "has surprised me so much as the harshness of Unionist Friends. They seem to shrink at nothing. The other evening we had an amendment which would have placed those who were imprisoned simply for refusing to give information that might criminate a parent or a friend in the rank of first-class misdemeanants, that is, give them two or three hours a day more of freedom from solitary confinement. I did hope that in this we might have the support of Mr. —— (naming an eminent Friend distinguished for his philanthropy). But the answer was a fierce and uncompromising negative." Such is the feeling that has been engendered and has been expressed in the Act passed by a party which would never have had the opportunity of practising coercion had its members not repudiated at the hustings any imputation that they contemplated such a policy. But the Act was only a true index to the spirit of its authors.

One of the first faults, and one of the greatest, was the appointment of Mr. Balfour. The affliction which withdrew Sir Michael Hicks Beach from public life was a calamity not only for the Tory party but for both countries. But it was made infinitely worse by the choice of his successor. In this crisis of the Irish nation the Tory Ministry thought it seemly and expedient to set over it as a ruler one who neither understood nor tried to understand the people or their representatives, and who, in fact, has made it his business to treat them with studied contempt. Whether Mr. Balfour is a Scotch rack-renting landlord and the kind of lackadaisical gentleman described by Mr. Philip Stanhope, it is not necessary to inquire. Be this as it may, it is no exaggeration to say that even in the ranks of the Tory party it would be hard to find a man so utterly unqualified for the office. He is an aristocrat of an extremely supercilious type, with a very considerable touch of the cynic. There may be offices in which he could render good services to the State, but the last which should have been assigned him is that which he now fills. The defender of "Philosophic doubt" is, by the

very tone and temper of his mind, disqualified for dealing with a high-spirited people, strongly influenced by sentiment. It was not long before he revealed his unfitness. His first idea was that the only way of dealing with Irish members is to snub them. His ostentatious absence from the House at question time was nothing short of a scandal, but with him it was a settled policy. The appointment of Col. King-Harman as his deputy was an aggravation of the original offence, and was regarded as such by many who have no sympathy with the Nationalists. The real meaning of the whole procedure was that Irishmen were to be forced into submission.

Now, waiving for the moment the question of right, can any man suppose that there can be any real union between two peoples so long as this is the mode of treatment adopted by the stronger towards the weaker, or, further (for this is also a point of importance), that such a policy has any prospect of success? Can we conceive of such a course of procedure being tolerated in relation to a body of English or Scotch members—much less to a large majority of their number? It will doubtless be said in reply that it is not possible to conceive of English or Scotch members adopting such discreditable tactics, but the retort is obvious. It is quite as impossible to conceive of Parliament deliberately setting at nought the wishes of five-sixths of the people of either country, as expressed through their own representatives. Were such an attempt made in relation to England or Scotland, or even any large part of England, Englishmen and Scotchmen might be found just as intractable as Irish Nationalists. Too many Englishmen unfortunately seem unable to show their ordinary sense of justice in dealing with Ireland. They forget the enormous disadvantage at which the weaker country is placed when her hundred members come into conflict with the five hundred representatives of England, and are indignant that she does not at once accept the decision of a majority as though it were the voice of Heaven. Could the positions be reversed, or could Englishmen exercise sufficient imagination to picture to

themselves the feelings with which they would regard a law forced upon England by a large majority of Irishmen in opposition to the will of five-sixths of the English members, they might be able to understand how Irishmen are thinking and feeling now. It is certain that England could not be governed under such conditions, and it is safe to assert that it will be found equally impossible to rule Ireland, so long, at all events, as she has a representation in the Imperial Parliament. If Coercion is to be effectual Ireland must be reduced to the level of a Crown colony and governed by mere force.

The melancholy scenes which marked the closing weeks of the last Session were sufficient to prove this. It is easy to rail against the Irish as obstructives who have no respect for *les convenances* of Parliament or the ordinary courtesies of political life, but this railing does not disturb them nor get rid of the evil. No earnest Liberal, who knows how the battles of freedom have been won, can regard with approval the degradation of the great Assembly which has done so much for the liberties not only of Great Britain but of the world. It is we who believe in progress, and in progress by means of free discussion, who have most reason to mourn over tactics which turn the work of legislation into a farce. But let us be just even in this matter. The obstruction practised by some of the Irishmen has been rude, lawless, reprehensible in a high degree, but it has not been purposeless, nor has it been without provocation. Very much must be condoned in men fighting against a Bill which they believed (a belief which events are rapidly confirming) to be aimed against the liberties of their country, and even the violent proceedings at the close of the Session might find some extenuation in the treatment to which they had previously been subject. Having smarted under the repeated application of the Closure, it was not very surprising that they should be tempted to avenge themselves when Mr. W. H. Smith was deprived of the one weapon which he has shown himself able to employ. After all, if the crisis was so serious as we are constantly told, the Tory lordlings might surely have given the par-

tridges a little longer lease of life, in order that they might remain and support their leader in his conflict against Parnellism and Crime. It does not promise well for the constancy of the "Unionist" party in that struggle which is before it, if Ireland is to be subdued by force, that its members cannot sacrifice a few days sport in the sacred cause.

We do not, however, put ourselves forward as advocates of the Irish tactics. We believe that they are a mistake even in policy, and yet we can understand the reasons which have led to their adoption. But what we insist upon is that they will not be changed because they are distasteful to the English people, even to those of them who are disposed to regard the Irish demands with most favour. Mr. Healy is very far from answering to the ideal of a member of Parliament, and he is quite as far removed from the ideal Irish gentleman, like Sir Thomas Esmond or some others of the Nationalist party. But it would seem that the Irish people regard him as fitted to carry on the kind of warfare they have to wage in the House of Commons. Our point is that while the present policy is pursued this warfare will not cease—that it is likely to become even more bitter and exasperating, and that its one certain effect is the degradation of what John Bright called "the mother of Parliaments." It can be ended only in two ways. One is the suspension of the Irish representation. This is the logical alternative to Home Rule, but is there any probability that it will be attempted? Is the majority, which in August last left poor Mr. Smith without his Closure at the very time when he was most sorely in need of it because it could not deny itself the enjoyment of the moors, likely to rise to the courage necessary for such an experiment? Or, if it was made, are the people of England at all likely to approve of it, or to make the enormous sacrifices which would certainly be necessary in the desperate struggle which must ensue?

But this is somewhat of a digression from the line we have marked out for ourselves, which is to look fairly at Mr. Balfour's administration. One of the difficulties in the

discussion is the all but impossibility of getting at the actual facts. Whatever be the incident with which we have to deal, it is pretty certain that we shall have accounts which are absolutely irreconcileable. About small and great matters alike there are the same extraordinary antagonisms of statement. We will, therefore, dismiss from our consideration the points on which this diversity exists, and deal only with those which are universally admitted. We will go even further, and admit, for the sake of argument, that the imprisonment of Mr. O'Brien, the late Lord Mayor of Dublin, and Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, were legitimate measures. We hold them to be blows aimed at liberty of speech and of public meeting, and in the only one of them which has come under the review of the High Court, the Chief Baron has pretty distinctly intimated that any offence committed by Mr. Blunt was of a purely technical character, and that he was convicted even of that on insufficient evidence. So far indeed as *The Times* is concerned that is a matter of very small importance. In one of those precious sentences in which, morning by morning, it proclaims its own disloyalty to all the best traditions of English liberty and right, it says, "It is no doubt proper to treat Mr. Blunt formally as a law-abiding person, but, as a matter of fact, he is a representative of the subversive doctrines which Mr. Cunningham-Graham, Mr. Davitt, Professor Stuart, Mr. John Burns, and Mr. William O'Brien met last night to enunciate." What this has to do with Mr. Blunt's imprisonment is not very clear, unless it is meant that as he has got a bad name (in the estimation, at least, of the leading journal), he must be a fit subject for Jedburgh justice. The worst is that so many from whom better things might have been expected accept this view, and seem perfectly satisfied that an Englishman should be thrust into prison, and subjected to the degradations inflicted upon felons, on the order of two magistrates, whose decision is treated by the Judge under whose review it comes as deserving only of contempt! We have no intention, however, of raising the question of the imprisonment. It is an act which would be justified on the

plea of public safety, and, as Parliament chose to give the power, it can hardly complain that it was exercised. We who objected to it from the first feel that the argument against it has been made all the stronger by the experience of its administration.

But if it was necessary to imprison these men, it surely was not necessary to degrade, humiliate, and torture them. They were political agitators and nothing else. The very head and front of their offending had this extent—no more. Whether the offence for which they were convicted was a new one we are forbidden to discuss; since Lord Selborne, in opposition to a whole body of accomplished lawyers, says that it was not, and it is the fashion of Unionists to assume that in matters of law Lord Selborne is infallible. This claim to infallibility on the part of individuals, whether in law or gospel, is somewhat inconvenient. But let that pass, and let us do our best to believe that, though these men have been convicted for acts which would have been perfectly innocent under the old law in England, and which would have been innocent in Ireland twelve months ago, the two countries are nevertheless governed by equal laws, and that the Crimes Act created no new offence. Still, there is the bare fact that Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Blunt were convicted of offences for which no indictment could be laid in this country. Mr. O'Brien's case is different. His speech in the House of Commons breathes a resolution to brave the law for the sake of the liberties of his country. Englishmen have been able to appreciate such daring in the case of Hungarians, or Poles, or Italians. O'Brien is simply following in the footsteps of Kossuth, Garibaldi, Mazzini—all of them heroes of the English people in their day. Still, if he be proved a rebel, the Government may feel bound, by the mere instinct of self-defence, to restrain his actions. About that point we raise no controversy. But let it be clearly understood that his is a political offence, and will be so adjudged by independent critics everywhere. Englishmen may deceive themselves with the idea that they are only punishing crime, but they will impose on no one. Friends of freedom will mourn over its old

champion, and despots will cry exultantly, "Art thou also become as one of us?" There is a political agitation which is pronounced dangerous to the State, and it must be put down. It is unfortunate that the Ministers who have to deal with it are the very men who, two years ago, were ready to enter into friendly relations with the same agitators. But, passing over that, we take facts as they are; we start with the supposition that law and order had to be maintained, and that it was necessary, as a defensive measure, to put these men in prison.

But this is only the first step. Detention is one thing, torture is another. And torture it was to Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Blunt. Lord Mayor Sullivan happened to fall into other hands, and received different treatment. But O'Brien, Blunt, and a number of others, were subject to the mental and moral torture involved in their being degraded to association with felons, and deprived of what are really the necessities of life to intellectual men. What can the motive of such treatment be? We should be very slow to believe that there was any purpose to injure them. Mr. Blunt, indeed, has as yet had no opportunity of sustaining his original statement on this point, but we hope and believe that he must have misunderstood the remarks which he reports. That Mr. Balfour may have thought to break the spirit of his opponents by giving them proof that they would receive no consideration on the ground of their influence in the country is possible. But if that were his calculation he has been miserably deceived. It is hard, indeed, to believe that any one but a sceptical cynic, breathing the heated atmosphere of party clubs and drawing-rooms, could ever have been so deluded. O'Brien has gained a position through his imprisonment which otherwise would have been impossible. The English people know him now as a high-minded patriot. Many may esteem him a fanatic, but we have not been in the habit of treating fanatics as felons. Even if they were dangerous, we should only imprison them; certainly not doom them to the cell, the plank bed, the felon's dress, and the felon's company.

The strongest condemnation of this, looked at from Mr.

Balfour's own point of view, is that it has proved useless, and being useless, it is something worse. It was hardly worth while to cover the Government with disgrace, and to put a new topic in the mouths of all Liberal speakers, which never fails to touch the popular imagination, in order that the victims of the Castle might receive ovations both in and out of Parliament. Ireland is not pacified, the power of her leaders is not broken, the National League is not suppressed, but the Government is damaged to an extent which is indicated in the elections which have recently been held. An impression is spreading far and wide, and is effecting even the supporters of the Ministry, that Mr. Balfour's action, as well as that of his uncle, has been marked by "incredible meanness." Ever has the descent been to a lower and yet lower depth. The imprisonment was accepted by those who were determined to risk much rather than concede Home Rule. The treatment of the prisoners caused some "searchings of heart" even among convinced Unionists. But the flouts and gibes and jeers of uncle and nephew have disgusted all who desire that even Tory statesmen should remember that they are English gentlemen.

But here we must break off for the present. Next month we propose to examine the pleas on the other side, and especially the *tu quoque* argument, as addressed to Mr. Gladstone.

#### MR. SPURGEON AND CONGREGATIONALISTS.

THE consequences of Mr. Spurgeon's action are gradually developing themselves. As was certain to be the case, the area of debate has been continually enlarged, new controversies have grown out of the original one; most unfortunate of all, personal feeling has been imported into a discussion out of which it ought to have been most jealously kept; and the consideration of an issue so grave as the loyalty of the Congregational Churches of both sections to the Evangelical faith, is

complicated by a prior discussion as to whether proper respect has been shown to Mr. Spurgeon. Such a controversy is worse than useless. In a matter so vital, personal considerations must give way to higher interests. Mr. Spurgeon acted in this spirit when he drew up the indictment against those with whom he has so long been on terms of friendship and fellowship, and he can hardly be surprised, nor can he reasonably complain, if their first anxiety is to rebut charges which strike at the very heart of their ministry, and, if believed, must paralyze their usefulness. We have only to see how eagerly the counts in his terrible impeachment have been caught up by every enemy of Nonconformity, and by every one who believes that the only security for Evangelical truth is to be found in creeds enforced by authority, in order to see that silent acquiescence in such an accusation was impossible. Mr. Spurgeon could not expect, and would hardly desire, that we should prove ourselves traitors to Nonconformity, in order that we might show due respect to him. For ourselves we have never uttered, nor will we utter, a solitary word in forgetfulness of the honour due to one whose ministry God has so abundantly blessed. The Baptist Union did not violate this rule when it felt bound to say that the statements ought not to have been made. If that could not be said, then the charges must be considered to be proved, for if it were otherwise, even the most devoted of Mr. Spurgeon's friends would hardly maintain that they ought to have been thus recklessly thrown upon the world unsustained by a solitary proof. It is not to be assumed that Mr. Spurgeon himself regards the vote of the Council of the Union as an insult. He is wiser than his too eager and passionate supporters, and as he does not "speak sponges" himself must be prepared for plain utterances on the other side.

It seems almost a work of supererogation, but it is necessary to repeat and to accentuate the statement as strongly as possible that this is a question touching the very life of a great ecclesiastical system. If the liberty enjoyed in Congregational Churches leads to a departure from the "simplicity of Christ," the consequences will be of the gravest kind, first

to Congregationalism, and ultimately to Christianity itself. For if Christian faith cannot live and preserve its purity in an atmosphere of freedom it cannot live at all. The system of repression is contrary to the spirit of the New Testament. It has been tried long enough, and has been an egregious failure. It is not edifying to see Anglicans and Presbyterians so eager to take out any mote there may be in our eye when they have many a beam in their own eyes. The history of their churches certainly furnishes no ground for the belief that if Congregationalism were found unequal to this crisis they would be able to supply its deficiencies. If, then, it could be shown that there was a decay of evangelical truth and piety in our churches, it would be nothing short of a grave calamity for all communities which hold the "common faith" of Christendom. Is it to be supposed that those who see this will stand by indifferent and careless whether this be so or not? Are they to be blamed if they endeavour to set forth the actual facts, and so try to allay the anxiety, certain before long to pass into panic, which Mr. Spurgeon's assertions could not but create?

Of course, every one who ventures into the arena and takes up the challenge, is sure to be misunderstood, and regarded as an opponent of Mr. Spurgeon; indeed, he may esteem himself fortunate if he is not supposed to be a champion of the heresy which is said to be so rife among Congregational ministers. It seems almost vain to urge that the question is not of theology, but of arithmetic, and yet this is literally true. I certainly should be one of the very last to plead that the Congregational ministry should include men who have forsaken the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. Nor have I ever ventured to deny that there may be in its ranks some who are open to this accusation. I go even further, and admit that there are tendencies at work in our pulpits and our churches which no one who loves the gospel can regard without some disquietude. They are abroad everywhere. They are in the air. They are touching the ministers and members of all churches. I believe our Congregational ministers and churches have been as

little affected by such influences as other communities. They have certainly felt them less than the Established Churches either of England or of Scotland. But it would be a foolish optimism to say that we have wholly escaped from them. It has certainly never been my intention to make light of these perilous tendencies, still less to apologize for those who have already yielded to them. If there are men who claim to be Christian ministers when they have cast all distinctive Christian truth out of their creeds, I would never be their defender or apologist.

The difference, therefore, I repeat, is one of arithmetic, but in this connection arithmetic is a very serious matter. For a few isolated cases (the existence of which I do not question, though I feel assured that their number is small) we cannot be held responsible as a denomination. The utmost watchfulness cannot prevent the intrusion of heretics, while their exclusion, even from highly organized churches, is not always so easy as might be thought. But if, instead of individual lapses, there was a wide-spread defection from the faith, that would indicate the presence of serious evil in the churches as a whole, and those who remained silent might be fairly reproached for cowardice, or regarded as accomplices in the treason. My contention is, that there is no such wide-spread apostasy. The lectures delivered in the Memorial Hall, and which will shortly be published, will, I hope, show that on my own part—and I must add on the part of the trusted leaders and representatives of Congregationalism who honoured me with their presence, and have kindly expressed their sympathy with the general aim and teaching of the lectures—there is no shrinking from the boldest utterance of the gospel of the grace of God, and not the faintest disposition to tamper with even the least of its glorious truths. It is not the first time that I have been impelled by a constraining sense of duty to do my utmost to make our position clear. In 1877 the challenge came from the opposite quarter, in the appeal made to Congregationalists to say whether they held certain doctrines essential to Christian fellowship, and the recollection of the events of that time has been helpful and encouraging

now. It was my pleasure to be one of the company, some of whom have already gone to their rest, who determined to give to that challenge an answer about which there should be no mistake. The conflict was keen, and we were told then, as we are told now, that there was a strong hostile force which we should have great difficulty to overcome. The event showed how groundless were all such anticipations and fears. After two long days of sustained debate, which would have done credit to any legislative assembly, the resolution embodying a declaration of the Evangelical belief of the churches was carried in an Assembly of the Union by a majority that was simply overwhelming. Out of 1,800 only forty voted in favour of the "previous question," and the majority even of these did not dissent from the declaration itself, but simply doubted the expediency of any action at all. It is not easy to see what evidence has been adduced to show that there has been a complete revolution within the last ten years. I have therefore felt justified in dissenting from the estimate formed by Mr. Spurgeon, and in vindicating that dissent as best I could. But my position remains unaltered. If the occasion arose, I would take the same stand as I did in 1878. I am no advocate for a liberty which would practically amount to a latitudinarianism that would leave us without definite creed at all. But I do plead for the largest amount of freedom to those whose faith in Christ as Saviour, and whose loyalty to Him as their Divine Lord, are beyond impeachment or suspicion. It is because I have found in such numbers of our young ministers this loyalty, in its strongest form, that I have spoken with so much earnestness and confidence on their behalf.

I am not at all insensible to the special difficulties of what may be called the "Broad Evangelical" position. It is raked by a cross-fire on the one side, from those who confound liberty with a latitudinarianism which treats all doctrines as equally true and equally false, and whose creed in some cases is perilously near to Rationalism, and on the other from those who mistake the spirit of tolerance for a faltering loyalty to truth. Still

there is for me no option but to risk the possibility of being thus treated as an enemy by both. It is indeed one of the unhappy consequences of the form which this controversy has assumed that many to whom some of the developments of what its friends are pleased to call "advanced thought" are as abhorrent as to Mr. Spurgeon himself, have been compelled to separate themselves from him. He appears now to be narrowing his allegations in the matter of heresy to the single point of a future probation. He will have no communion with those who believe in a "post-mortem salvation." It is just there that the divergence must arise, for among those who cannot teach the "larger hope" there are numbers who will not make the denial of it a test of Christian fellowship. That is my own case. I do not see that warrant for this "larger hope" in Scripture which would justify me in preaching it to sinners. The responsibility of encouraging men to trust in what may ultimately prove to be a "refuge of lies" is too tremendous for me to accept. I am increasingly conscious of the danger of suggesting hopes which possibly may prove to be delusions, and I fear lest the very hint of a possibility of another probation may, perhaps unconsciously to himself, abate in the preacher's mind the sense of the supreme value of life—the only season for repentance of which he can have any assurance—and to weaken the cogency and chill the fervour of his appeals. Its effect upon the hearers is even more to be dreaded, and while I dare not put limitations on the grace of God, to me the duty is clear incessantly to warn men that this is *the* day of salvation. But if there be other Christian men who think that there is scriptural warrant for the hope that even in another world the blood of Christ may avail to the salvation of the soul, I certainly cannot consent to treat those who believe that there can be no blessedness without holiness, no holiness without forgiveness of sin and the renewal of the nature, and neither forgiveness nor regeneration without the grace of God as manifest in the sacrifice of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, as outside the pale of Christian fellowship,

simply because they believe also that the time for the work of that grace is not limited to the present life.

It would be worse than impertinent, it would be intolerant in me were I to judge Mr. Spurgeon because he holds a contrary view, and regards the cherishing of such a hope as involving a departure from the Evangelical faith. But is it too much to expect that he will acknowledge that there are those who dissent from this view to whom that faith is as dear as to himself, and who, when occasion demands, are prepared to be as strenuous in its defence. I have already had to make this clear. In the anonymous letters which came to me in consequence of my recent lectures, the Anerley Church was distinctly pointed to in proof of Mr. Spurgeon's contention, and it was the only one named. Events have subsequently brought it into prominence of a very unenviable kind. *The Christian World*, in an article headed "The Penalty of Honesty," pointed to it as a case to which my principles applied, and I felt compelled to write an answer :

THE "PENALTY OF HONESTY."

To the Editor of *The Christian World*.

SIR,—I cannot allow the references to myself and my recent lectures, in the account of Mr. Halsey's resignation, to pass without comment. In speaking of "Broad Evangelical," I laid, at least, as much stress upon the last word, which is descriptive of the creed, as on the first, which characterizes the spirit in which the creed is held. My contention is for liberty in Christ, not for liberty to deny Christ and still retain a Christian profession or occupy a Christian pulpit. Our Congregational churches are not meant to be mere societies for ethical culture or philanthropic enterprise, still less are they mutual admiration societies in which ministers and people exchange pleasant compliments as to the honesty of the one and the devotion of the other. They are Christian communities, whose duty it is by word and deed to preach Christ crucified. The buildings they occupy they hold in trust for this purpose. To use them for undermining the faith of men in Christ as Saviour and Lord is, in my judgment, a flagrant breach of honesty which would not be tolerated elsewhere. These, at all events, are the views for which I have contended. As to the particular case to which your article refers, I know nothing except by hearsay, and, therefore, do not even hint an opinion upon it, and abstain from some observations which your article provokes, lest I

should seem to prejudge it. All I wish to do is to make my own position clear. I should contend as earnestly for the central truth of the gospel as the essential condition of Christian fellowship, as the most ardent defender of the Calvinistic creed.

Yours,  
J. GUINNESS ROGERS.

The *Nonconformist and Independent*, acting, I believe, on imperfect information, next assailed the minority in the Church, and the following reply exactly defines my own position :—

“ HERESY-HUNTING.”

To the Editor of *The Nonconformist and Independent*.

SIR,—In the interest of Christian liberty as well as of Christian truth, I wish to enter my protest against your paragraph of last week in relation to the affairs of the Church at Anerley.

These affairs are still *sub judice*, and I should be the last to say a word to prejudge them, but one thing is certain—that the issue which has been raised by the opponents of the minister is one of the most grave and momentous character, and cannot be dismissed in the summary, not to say offensive, fashion in which you dealt with it last week. Some consideration is surely due to members of churches who feel that the truths which they hold most precious, and which, in fact, constitute the essence of the gospel, are being steadily undermined by the preaching and influence of the pulpit. They may be right or wrong; but those who thus contend for the essential principles of the Evangelical faith, as set forth in the Trust Deed, are surely not to be designated as “bigots who snarl and yelp,” and who are to be treated, as you say, “with the contempt they deserve.” If they are bringing false charges, by all means let them be exposed. This is a matter of evidence, and if the accusers are found false witnesses, they are worse than bigots. If, on the other hand, they can prove their case, they are only discharging a Christian duty. I condemn mere heresy-hunting as much as any man; but heresy-hunting is not to be confounded with an honest and loyal contention for our common faith. I object to the principle of constructive treason alike in Church and State, and if the allegations referred only to forms of expression, particular theories of doctrine, or, above all, views on doctrine which do not touch the central truth of the gospel itself, I should be the last to say a word in defence of what then might be properly called heresy-hunting. But to judge from the report of the meeting held at Anerley which I have before me, the charges brought by the malecontents concern vital principles which concern all that is most precious in our church life and all that is most sacred in our per-

sonal experience. Devoted Congregationalist as I am, if I thought that it left the doctrines of the Divinity and Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, man's universal need of redemption and regeneration, and the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, open questions in its churches, I must seek my religious home in some other community.

I wish it to be clearly understood that I am not attempting to pronounce judgment in this particular case. It remains to be judged in its own merits. I write simply because of the principles underlying your paragraph of last week. Every man who raises his voice on behalf of Christian liberty has quite enough to suffer from heresy-hunters, and certainly on behalf of those who would thus make men offenders for a word, I should be the last to advance a solitary plea. But, on the other hand, it is equally necessary—especially at a crisis like this—that we should not allow Christian liberty to be so abused that it shall be merely a mask for disloyalty to Christ. I am extremely sorry that this reference to general principles should be complicated by the introduction of an individual case, but the responsibility for that does not rest with me.

Yours, &c.,  
J. GUINNESS ROGERS.

In conclusion, I would respectfully urge Mr. Spurgeon seriously to consider whether it is wise to perpetuate this antagonism between himself and others who are as jealous for the honour of the gospel, but who do not believe that its purity is at all corrupted, or its authority weakened, by a tolerance of opinions which do not dim the glory of its central truth—that Jesus is Christ and Lord.

EDITOR.

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#### EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE meeting of Nonconformist ministers, at the Memorial Hall to protest against the Coercion policy of the Government was a marked success, and will, it may be hoped, initiate a movement of a more extended and permanent character. For every day makes it more apparent that Nonconformist interests must ultimately be affected by the ascendancy which Liberal Unionists are giving to this most reactionary of Tory Governments. A Committee of Vigilance was therefore appointed in view of contingencies

which no clear-sighted politician would pronounce improbable. That changes are contemplated in the educational arrangements of the country is certain. The evidence of Lord Lingen which is published elsewhere indicates the views of the department, and suggests lines along which the changes may proceed. That the Royal Commission will do its utmost to conserve the denominational schools, and if possible, to extend them, is beyond reasonable doubt. The question which remains is as to the action of the Government. It may, of course, hesitate to venture on so dangerous an experiment, but it does not seem to us that the probabilities are on that side. It will be strongly pressed by the clerical party, and there is no reason why it should hold back unless it be a doubt as to the Liberal Unionists. But if Nonconformists and the friends of undenominational education rely upon them, they are certainly resting on a broken reed. We can scarcely point to one of them, with the exception of the members for Birmingham, who have shown any real interest in keeping religion free from clerical control. As to Lord Hartington and his followers, they would hardly affect any interest in the subject, and after his lordship's avowed readiness to tolerate some measure of protection rather than risk the possibility of a breach in the Unionist alliance, it is not to be supposed that he would brave the possibility of such a calamity for the sake of meeting Nonconformist scruples. It is quite possible, therefore, that we may have to face a proposal for such an increase in the payments from public funds for sectarian purposes, which would come to little less than the creation of a new class establishment; and if in such a crisis we are not able to help ourselves, there will be no effectual resistance. Liberal Unionists may still insist that they are loyal to Liberalism, but the value of that loyalty is not very apparent since it does not prevent them from sacrificing any or every Liberal principle when its assertion would be inconvenient or dangerous to the Government, which they are resolved to maintain in office at all costs. This is the point on which numbers were deceived at the last election. They believed, and had

a right to believe, that in voting for some one of that distinguished company, which included all the intellect and morality of the Liberal party, alienated from Mr. Gladstone by his reckless policy, they were pronouncing simply against Home Rule. They were assured that on all other points the Unionists remained Liberal, and it needed a bitter experience to undeceive them. The fact is whenever the Government puts down its foot it has no more reliable votes than those of the Liberal Unionists. Nonconformists have no reason to expect that the Education question will be an exception. At least, if it is, it will be because they make their strength felt. The business of the hour is so to educate opinion that if the conflict comes it may not find them unprepared. One of their chief difficulties arises from the reluctance or inability of those who believe that Education is the panacea for every ill, and who regard religion with unconcealed aversion, to understand that the sectarianism against which they protest is as unfriendly to the progress of education as it is opposed to the first principles of justice.

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In the speeches both of Dr. Parker and Mr. Rogers at the meeting, reference was made to the objection taken by some to the united action of ministers in opposition to Coercion. By a strange coincidence at the very time when some Nonconformists are talking in a style so unusual in their circles a number of the best men among the clergy are adopting the exactly opposite course, and contrary to the tradition of their order, committing themselves to the expression of sympathy with Mr. Gladstone in his great work. The courage shown by men who, in the present state of opinion in Church circles, take this manly course is beyond all praise, and reads a necessary and useful lesson to some amongst ourselves who are hanging back. Of these there are two classes. The one class entertain conscientious objections to this mode of procedure, and have consistently maintained them under all circumstances. From the other we hear of them for the first time now. On other questions

which were not more germane to our work they were not slow to join with their brethren in expressing their opinions. The answer given to this is that on these their congregations were of one mind, whereas now there is considerable division. We deny the alleged facts, and we challenge the inferences drawn from them. Opinion was divided in our churches as to the merits of the North and South in the American Civil War, for while there was unanimity on the subject of slavery, there was wide divergence of opinion (especially in the earlier stages of the war, before Lincoln's proclamation) as to the intentions of the North in relation to it. Yet the Congregational Union was urged to declare on behalf of the North, and its ardent champions among our ministers did not pause to consider whether they represented the opinions of their entire congregation or not. They did quite right, but they cannot, with any semblance of consistency, complain of those who feel that they are bound, as ministers of the gospel, to protest against the oppression which is being carried on in Ireland. For that tyranny we, as British citizens, have a direct responsibility which we cannot possibly evade. We are told, indeed, that we are free to act as citizens, but not as ministers. Our mind is not sufficiently subtle to see how the distinction is to be made. It is the old story of the Prince-Bishop, in relation to whom the pertinent question was asked, "If the devil ran away with the Prince, what would come of the Bishop?" The theory of a dual character cannot endure when brought into contact with the stern realities of life. In the calculation as to the late Southwark election, it was said that Mr. Spurgeon's action had materially affected the result in 1886, and his brother's letter was reckoned on to produce an opposite effect in 1888. To what extent either of these suppositions is true we cannot determine. That Mr. Spurgeon's condemnation of Home Rule did influence votes in 1886 is undoubted. What we wish to know is in what character was it written? It was a simple letter to a friend—about the most innocent form of political activity that could be adopted; but it was not less effective, nor was it likely to be less unpleasant for those of his congregation who did not sympa-

thize with his views. The fact is he could not, nor can any of us, divest himself of the character in which he is known to the world. The letter had power, not because of its argumentative force, but because it came from the most popular Nonconformist preacher, and the minister of the largest Nonconformist congregation, in England.

But if it were possible that ministers could thus put aside their official character and responsibility, is it desirable that they should? Would the sacrifice be for the increase of their religious influence, or for the advancement of the gospel, for the glory of the Master they serve? In our judgment, nothing could more effectually neutralize their power for good and baffle the ends of their ministry than the faintest suspicion that their speech is to some extent controlled by their congregations, and that they keep silence from good words, which they feel ought to be spoken, if they have reason to think their speech would be offensive to some members of their congregation. As a matter of policy it is a mistake, for there can be no vainer dream than the supposition that those who object to their views will make the distinction which they set up, and be content that they should speak out boldly as citizens, provided they are silent as ministers. The real objection is to the exercise of the powerful and independent influence which Christian ministers can exert, and which they may be expected to exert, on behalf of liberty and progress. Their voice is not likely to be in accord with that of the Stock Exchange or of Society; the desire of those who pay deference to either is that it should be silenced. The first objection was to political sermons, and for that there is reason, though that which is generally urged in its favour is singularly weak. Political preaching is objectionable, not so much because there is no immediate opportunity of reply as because the proper work of the pulpit is of far higher importance, and the time for doing it is so brief. There are great crises, in which principles of national righteousness are at stake, when the pulpit may properly be used for enforcing them, but these are rare occasions, and, in our judgment, it is not desirable to mul-

tiply them unnecessarily. Recognizing fully the duty of ministers of the gospel to insist on the application of its principles to all public questions, we still feel that only the imperative sense of duty justifies a man in using for this purpose the few opportunities he has of pressing the claims of the Master upon the hearts and consciences of men. Hence we are more than content that the drift of opinion in the Churches should be against the introduction of political subjects into the pulpit. But this new idea that ministers shall not, in any collective capacity, take political action, means a demand, involving a serious curtailment of personal liberty, which must be resisted, not because of any political interests at stake, but for the sake of that independence which is essential to all ministerial power.

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It is this independence which we desire to safeguard. Let it be once invaded, and the restrictions imposed will not be confined to polities. There are differences existing in the churches on other subjects, and if the principle be once conceded that ministers must not commit themselves on questions in relation to which their people are divided, they will not lack occasions for exercising the virtue of silence. It is impossible to read the anonymous correspondence in our newspapers without feeling that already the spirit of interference is sufficiently active. The underlying idea in many of the letters to which we refer seems to be that the preacher is to be the hireling of the particular church to which he ministers, and that it is his business to consult the feelings or wishes of its members rather than his own sense of duty. This is not the conception of our ministry which was held by the men who have made Nonconformity a power, it is not that which has been accepted among Congregationalists, and the more it prevails the weaker will be our influence on the nation. There could be no greater fallacy than to imagine that Congregational ministers are listened to because they are supposed to represent the views of our congregations. Just in so far as this was believed they would be utterly powerless, for shrewd

men would perceive that men who had only eyes to see, and ears to hear, and a mouth to speak, except at the will of their congregations, would certainly fail to influence them, and could not be trusted even as faithful representatives of their own views. The impression which a religious teacher produces must be largely determined by the faith his hearers have in his independence and sincerity. If he has intelligence and eloquence, these are estimated at their proper worth; but the very first and indispensable condition of influence is that his voice be the voice of a true man, who speaks out of his own heart what is in him, and not what he supposes to be in that of other people. And so, in proportion as men forget his individuality, and treat him as a mouthpiece of others, his power declines. No doubt a representative, chosen to express the opinion of a congregation, would receive attention and deference proportionate to the importance of the body by whom he was delegated. But the quasi-representative counts for little. It is the influence which a man is likely to exert over his congregation which alone gives value to his utterances. There are other ways of learning what his congregation thinks. Men want to know what he thinks, and whether his opinion is so intelligently formed and so clearly expressed as to affect others. Very likely he may have to pay the penalty for his honesty, but that does not disturb a true man.

In fine, we hold that there never was a time when it was more essential for our ministers to preserve their independence. We have at last been aroused to the conviction that we must lay hold of the people. But nothing would more certainly stand in the way of that than the suspicion that our ministers were so dominated by the middle class that they would be silent on all public questions in relation to which the opinion of that class was divided.

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The welcome given to Dr. Dale by his congregation on his return from Australia, was in every way worthy of the man and of the occasion. Dr. Dale has been on a distinguished embassage, carrying messages of fraternal

greeting between the churches at home and those in our great colonies, and what is of even higher value, bringing the full power of his noble intellect and large heart to bear upon our kindred in those distant lands. His visit has been one signal success, marred only by the sickness which incapacitated him from carrying out his programme as originally attended. The deviation, however, was much less than has been supposed. He had to change a few plans, but he fulfilled all the promises he had made, with the exception of three or four days subtracted from his visit to New South Wales. On the 20th of last month his congregation met in the Town Hall, to celebrate his return; and certainly no pastor could desire a more loving and enthusiastic welcome. The address which was presented was singularly felicitous, both in thought and expression. In a spirit of true unselfishness, they had given up their pastor for a time to the service of the churches and the world, and they had their reward in the testimonies as to the blessings which he had carried with him to other lands, and in the happiness of seeing him again in renewed health and vigour. A striking feature in the Hall was a motto running across the front gallery, "We love you and we tell you so." Could anything more happily describe the relation which should subsist between pastor and people? During eighty-five years the church at Carr's Lane has had but two pastors. At one of Dr. Dale's meetings in Australia, a speaker referred to the first acquaintance with him. Many years ago he was brought in contact, on the same day, with Mr. Angell James and Dr., then Mr. Dale. In conversation with the former, he asked his opinion of co-pastors. Mr. James' verdict was not favourable to such arrangements. "But you," said his friend, "are very happy at Carr's Lane." "Oh! yes!" said Mr. James, "impossible that anything could work better; but the young man is so modest, so considerate of the old one, so delicate in all his relations." In the afternoon he was with Mr. Dale, and put a question to him, intended to draw out his views on the point. "Yes," said Mr. Dale, with his usual heartiness, "we are as happy together as can be. Mr. James is so wonder-

fully kind and tender, so desirous to make everything straight and pleasant." Happy the church that has had such pastors. The prayers of all our churches ascend on behalf of one so universally beloved and honoured as Dr. Dale; and of the church which proves itself worthy of him by its sincere and loving devotion. We must not forget to add, for the credit of Birmingham, that the address was a marvel of artistic beauty, marked by originality of design and finish in execution.

Dr. Dale is a conspicuous example of the power which attends the honest independence of which I have been speaking. There is in him a rare combination of qualities, which have given him the position he has won in the affection of those who know him, but there is not one which has done more for him than his fearless devotion to truth and duty. He has a giant's strength, but he uses it with a consideration for others which reveals the spirit of the true Christian. In his heart is a fountain of tenderness which is inexhaustible, but not even that, nor the vigour of his brain, has done so much to secure for him universal respect as the prophet-like boldness with which he has always set forth his own convictions, without pausing to consider whether they would be popular or unpopular. My knowledge of him has been close and intimate, and I can truly say that he has always appeared to me absolutely superior to the fear of man. I have not always agreed with him, but I have always felt that his opinion had been formed, not only in all honesty, but with an utter disregard of all selfish considerations. Birmingham has felt this, and honours him accordingly, not as the eloquent preacher or the powerful orator only, but as the true man. We doubt whether there is another man who possesses the influence which Dr. Dale wields over that strong-headed population, and in that is the hope for Birmingham Liberalism, even in its present state of chaos and confusion, and his force depends largely on his personality. The Australian papers which are in our hand show how much this was felt in the Colonies. They were impressed by his genius, but they were conquered by the nobility of the man.

## CURRENT LITERATURE.

*In Exchange for a Soul.* By MARY LINSKILL. 3 vols. (Chatto and Windus.) *Hagar.* By MARY LINSKILL. (James Clarke and Co.) There is so much of ability, if not even of genius, in Miss Linskill, and the tone of her stories is so healthy, that it may be worth while to point out one or two faults, which threaten to interfere with that success which she is so fitted to achieve. Both of the works before us show considerable power, but, in our judgment, the latter, though more modest in pretensions, and possibly for that very reason, is the more satisfactory of the two. "*In Exchange for a Soul*" is a praiseworthy attempt to point a great truth which is too apt to be overlooked, and in the inculcation of the lesson Miss Linskill exhibits something more than tact and judgment—a capacity of dealing with moral and spiritual problems, which is as valuable as it is rare. The agony and suffering through which the heroine has to pass are due to her listening to the suggestions of mere worldliness in accepting a suitor for whom she had no real love. Nothing, of course, is more common in fiction than an incident of this kind. It is in the mode in which it is developed that the peculiar art of Miss Linskill appears. In the first place, the offence is made of the slightest possible kind. There is nothing in the man to whom our heroine pledged herself open to special objection, and, indeed, by all her friends he is regarded as the one man she ought to marry. When she plighted her troth to him there was no other rival affection in her heart, nor had she any distinct objection to him. Indeed, she was half-doubtful whether she loved him or not. It was only gradually that she woke to the consciousness that she had really been captivated by the prospect of a brilliant position, and that for this she was bartering her soul. This delicacy of touch greatly enhances the power of the impression, and the whole story of the awakening of conscience to the result is exceedingly well told. The other love story, which runs parallel with it, and in which the rough, selfish, indolent brother of our heroine is softened, refined, and even ennobled, by the power of a pure affection for a noble-minded fisher-girl, who is one of the most striking figures in the book, teaches the same lesson in another way. We should be ungrateful if we did not recognize the charm of the story, but, if truth must be told, Miss Linskill is too fond of preaching. This is the reason why we are disposed to regard "*Hagar*" so favourably. As a story, it is too short and slight to compare with the other. But there is in it less of "padding," and of a particular kind of padding which is not generally attractive. We must add that we have had enough for the present of these wonderful peasant and fisher-girls, who are wonderful in moral qualities as in personal beauty.

*A Short History of the English People.* By JOHN RICHARD GREEN. New Edition, thoroughly revised. (Macmillan and Co.) Of the extra-

ordinary merit of this book it would be nothing short of impertinence for us to speak. Modest and unpretending as its title proclaims it to be, it was nevertheless one of the books which take the world by storm. It was at once felt to be the very book for which multitudes had been longing, and it achieved a success which was almost unprecedented, and which was as well deserved as it was remarkable. The true conception of what such a book ought to be, the fulness of the information condensed into so brief a compass, the singular art by which the writer escaped from the dulness which is the common fault of a narrative too much abridged to allow of the detail and colouring which give picturesqueness, and, above all, the liberal and enlightened yet impartial temper with which the whole was written, combined to secure for it a popularity which certainly has never waned. Of course, it has had critics, and, as might have been expected in a work covering so wide an area, those critics have detected some inaccuracies. They were but trifles, but of course envy sought to magnify them. These have all been corrected in this new edition, which has been thoroughly revised by his mourning widow. She says, "I know of no excuse which I could give for attempting any revision of the 'Short History' save that this was my husband's last charge to me. Nor can I give any other safeguard for the way in which I have performed the work, than the sincere and laborious effort I have made to carry out that charge faithfully. I have been very careful not to interfere in any way with the plan or structure of the book, and, save a few exceptional cases, in which I knew Mr. Green's wishes, or where a change of chronology made some slight change in arrangement necessary, I have not altered its order. My work has been rather that of correcting mistakes of detail which must of a certainty occur in a story which covers so vast a field; and in this I have been mainly guided throughout by the work of revision done by Mr. Green himself in his larger 'History.' " The task which affection led her to undertake has been discharged by Mrs. Green in the most effective way. She has omitted nothing which could make the book perfect. But the most interesting feature of this edition is Mrs. Green's account of the author and his book in the brief introduction. It not only tells the story of the dauntless courage with which, in the presence of terrible difficulties, he undertook and carried out the work with which his name will be always associated, but enables us also to understand something of the genesis of the book itself. We lay down this interesting and somewhat pathetic account, mourning first that death so soon arrested the career of one who promised to be one of our greatest historians; and then indignant to think that Oxford, with all its immense resources, did so little for a man whose genius has reflected upon her such a high honour.

*Shakespeare and Other Lectures.* By GEORGE DAWSON, M.A. Edited by GEORGE ST. CLAIR. (Kegan Paul, Trench and Co.) This is a

somewhat miscellaneous collection, alike as to the subjects which are treated and the exact value of the papers themselves. Shakespeare occupies a very considerable portion of the space, but we gather that for most, if not all, of the papers we are dependent upon reports which are not always of a perfect character. Thus, *e.g.*, the lecture on Romeo and Juliet is clearly only a fragment, and, in fact, only a newspaper reporter's account of what Mr. Dawson actually said. Whether it was wise to embody such notes in a book which is intended to be of permanent value is open to doubt. Many of the other reports, as the speeches at the anniversary of our Shakespeare Club, of which Mr. Dawson appears to have been a kind of perpetual president, are fuller, and yet it is subjecting a man's reputation to a very severe test to reprint utterances which might have been supposed to be somewhat ephemeral in their character. There are certainly few men who could have stood such a test as George Dawson has done. The freshness and variety which he introduces from year to year into the treatment of the old subject speak much for his own fertility of resource and for the constant study which he must have given to Shakespeare. That he succeeded in inspiring an enthusiasm for the immortal bard, and that the Shakespeare library in Birmingham became, as he said it would, "one of the greatest in existence" and one of the greatest curiosities in Birmingham, is not surprising. Shakespeare to him was little less than a religion. Two or three sentences indicate his view of him. "You and I have long passed those foolish stages where divines and pious people of all sorts discourse whether Shakespeare was a moral writer. If he were *only* that, I should not care much for him. I might then put Shakespeare along with Mrs. Barbauld, Dr. Doddridge, and Dr. Watts. Morals! Shakespeare rises above morals. There has been no sweeter preacher of Jesus Christ since Christ lived than William Shakespeare. No man ever drank in more fully the distinctive features of the Gospel. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not morality, is not teaching men how to keep themselves clean, but teaching them divineness—the divineness of forgiveness, of perpetual mercy, of constant patience, of endless peace, of perpetual gentleness. If you can show me one who knew these things better than this man, then show him; I know him not." And again: "What is the crowning glory of a man? It is mercy. For to me the eminent beauty of a Christian faith is, that it preaches of God always merciful, at all times, and under all circumstances, and I know no human chorister who has lifted up so holy an Amen to the sweet cry of the perpetual mercy of God as English William Shakespeare." These views will serve to explain the intense and passionate feeling which Mr. Dawson had about Shakespeare, and which it is difficult to share to the full extent. Few men have studied him more closely, and still fewer have discovered richer gems of thought and wisdom in his writings. But Shakespeare is only one of the many topics which are treated in this volume, ranging from discourses on things unseen to lectures on Don

Quixote and Beau Brummel. But whatever Mr. Dawson touched he adorned. There is not a dull paper in the volume, and indeed the brightness and felicity in the mode of treatment, not less than the insight shown in his views, serves to explain the great popularity and wide-spread influence which Mr. Dawson enjoyed.

*Harmonia. A Chronicle.* By the Author of "Estelle Russell." In three vols. (Macmillan and Co.) Our authoress has rightly described her book. It is a "study" rather than a novel, but it is necessary to add this qualification, it has a life, a variety of incident, and a sustained interest which many novels lack. It can scarcely be said that she has a hero and heroine, for though the two who fill these parts in the book have much of true heroism about them, and certainly engage the sympathy of the reader throughout, yet they are little more than central figures round which a group of others are collected. "Harmonia" is a new settlement in America, and the book tells the story of its fortunes, gives us striking photographs of the people who have been so strangely thrown together, and between whom there are no bonds of union except such as have been created under these unfamiliar conditions, and introduces some romantic incidents of every-day life. Herein lies one of the charms of the book. The people to whom we are introduced would be regarded as commonplace were we to meet them in society anywhere, and at first we are disposed to think that they will be extremely dull. As they are gathered together at the hotel they seem about as unattractive a group as it would have been easy to collect. The artistic skill of the authoress is shown in the interest with which she contrives to invest them. There is hardly one of them who has not a history and a marked individuality which will not allow us easily to forget them. There are no less than three clergymen in the settlement beside the bishop, who pays a passing visit, and succeeds in leaving a very pleasant impression. One of the peculiarities of the book is that there are several centres of interest, and yet there is no sense of any want of unity. Altogether the book is unique, and if the object of the writer is to show how much of instruction, and even of excitement, may be found in scenes and characters which the ordinary observer would regard as humdrum, it has been very successfully accomplished. Some of the portraits drawn here are singularly well done, and must live in the memory. Mrs. Bloy, the rector's wife, whose one thought is about the "donations," Mrs. Haverstock with her tracts on the lost tribes of Israel, Mr. Dennings with his life's burden so nobly borne, and the whole family of the Ellacombe's, are admirably drawn. But the whole book is marked by an originality of conception and a finish in execution which unfortunately is not too common.

*Betel-Nut Island.* By JOHN T. BEIGHTON. (Religious Tract Society.) This book contains records of the author's "personal experiences and

adventures in the Eastern Tropics." Betel-Nut Island is a small island in the Straits of Malacca, "commercially and commonly called Penang." Here the writer was born, and here he spent his boyhood. The account he gives us of the island itself, its physical configuration and climate, and of its history, is full of interest, especially as he himself played a part in many of the events which he relates. A serious and critical illness, followed by his recovery and his conversion to God, form the subject of the second chapter, entitled, "A Neglected Tract," the story of the latter affording abundant encouragement to all who seek to do good by the distribution of tracts. The story of his cannibal friend who became a devout and earnest Christian is a striking evidence of the power of the grace of God to enoble, to elevate, and to sanctify the most sinful and the most degraded specimens of humanity. "Can we," he pertinently says, "in view of such a history, believe that there is only a link missing in a common ancestor between man, even in the lowest type, and the chimpanzee or orang-utan?" In "The Rescued Orphan" we have a record of a daughter of a groom who was turned from idols to worship the living and true God, a striking example of the good that is often done by means of the Mission School, and a strong inducement to teachers to persevere in their work of faith and their labour of love. The chapter entitled, "A Good Word for the Chinaman," contains some useful and valuable information concerning the Chinese character and the Chinese religion, tending to place the Chinaman in a more favourable light than that in which most people have been accustomed to regard him. Speaking of the almsgiving of the Chinese, the writer, after pointing out that Christianity is "the parent force of the charitable institutions of the world, goes on to say, "But it ought not to be forgotten that the ancient sage, whose influence in China is paramount, taught his disciples to 'treat others according to the treatment which they themselves would desire at their hands.' It ought also to be known that year by year lectures are required by the Government to be delivered in all parts of the empire on 'Union and Concord among Kindred,' 'Concord and Agreement among Neighbours,' on 'Mutual Forbearance,' and 'Reconciling Animosities.' Is it sufficiently known that in various parts of the country stand buildings by the roadside and canal-side, erected by neighbouring philanthropists, in which supplies of tea are gratuitously provided for any traveller who may be passing by? That, on the whole, the people are contented, law-abiding, good-humoured, excessively polite, and reverential to their parents and to the aged, is no doubt generally understood; but it ought now to be quite as well known that from time immemorial systematic operations of charities like our own have been in existence. There are numerous cities in which will be found some, if not all, such charitable institutions as dispensaries, almshouses, leper-houses, asylums for the blind, and homes for foundlings. Look at one of these, 'The Hall of United Benevolence,' at Shanghai. It has existed for ages, and, I believe, still flourishes. It has in

different parts of the great city its schools for children, hospitals for the sick, homes for the aged and infirm, almshouses for widows, and asylums for foundling boys and girls, while also befriending the necessitous poor generally by providing food and clothing, distributing coffins, and taking charge of their graves. True, there are very black shadows on the bright picture which, in justice, we have drawn; but where is the nation, however virtuous and exalted, that has not its shady side, and that, too, *very* shady? If the Chinese, without Christianity, can be what they are, what will China be when it is Christian China? 'For brass,' says the great and good Father of all, 'I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stone iron!'" The writer seems to have had an unusually eventful history, and met with a great variety of interesting, and sometimes exciting, adventures. His book is not a romance, though it reads like one, but a simple and plain record of incidents and facts which have come under the observation or happened in the experience. The volume is a small one, but it has an interest and value which do not always belong to larger and more pretentious works.

*Protestant Missions in Pagan Lands.* By REV. EDWARD STORROW. (John Snow & Co.) This is an earnest endeavour to "present in a condensed form the whole subject of Christian Missions fairly before various classes of minds, with the hope that in many it may at least be raised to a higher and truer place." There is no doubt, as Mr. Storror says, that by many people Foreign Missions are not rightly understood, and consequently not fully appreciated, and if this book should have the effect of removing their ignorance or apathy in relation to them, it will render a good service. The writer takes a wide survey of the entire mission field, including in his account of missionary operations the work of all societies and all denominations, and seeking to do impartial justice to all true work and workers. After briefly sketching the religious condition of the world, and the moral and social condition of non-Christian races, the writer goes on to look at false religions in the light of Scripture, and to explain the philosophy of missions. This done, our author proceeds first to relate the history of missionary effort in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, and then to trace the rise and development of modern missions. The remaining chapters of his book are devoted chiefly to a rapid survey of the entire mission field at the present time. In the closing chapter of his work, he gives some very useful practical hints as to the cultivation of the missionary spirit, to which all workers in the cause of Christ would do well to give careful heed. The book altogether is a small but valuable contribution to the literature of Christian missions, and the formidable and imposing array of facts, truths, and principles which it contains cannot but have great weight with all candid and impartial minds. It is one which should certainly be read by all who desire to possess themselves with the real

facts of the case, and to form just and accurate views of the subject as a whole.

*Bible Lessons in Joshua and Judges.* By REV. J. GURNEY HOARD, M.A. (J. Nisbet and Co.) This book contains fifty-two short outlines of lessons taken from the books of Joshua and Judges. The outlines are clear and striking, and, if used in the manner indicated in the preface, may prove both useful and suggestive to the diligent and thoughtful teacher.

*Studies in the First Epistle of Peter.* By REV. G. CYNDDLYAN JONES, D.D. (Hamilton Adams and Co.) Seventeen expository discourses. They are marked by clearness of arrangement, a good command of language, and a considerable power of spiritual insight. The book is above the average of works of its class, and bears traces both of wide reading and of careful thinking.

*Bible Readings.* Selected from the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua. By REV. J. A. CROSS. Second edition. (Macmillan and Co.) This book is designed to meet a want which is felt by many parents of a book of readings from the Bible suited for children. The passages are carefully chosen, so as to give a good idea of the Bible narrative from the creation to the occupation of the Promised Land.

*Non-Biblical Systems of Religion.* A Symposium. (J. Nisbet and Co.) The science of comparative religion has made great strides of late years, owing partly to the researches of scholars, and partly also to our increased facilities of intercourse with foreign nations. The book before us is intended to "furnish comprehensive outlines of the chief religious systems of the world in a popular, and yet fairly accurate and scholarly way." The various branches of the subject are ably treated by different writers, some of whom are authorities in their respective departments. The effect of reading the book can only be to strengthen faith in Christianity as the one Divine religion of the world.

*Teaching and Teachers; or, the Sunday School Teacher's Teaching Work, and the other Work of the Sunday School Teacher.* Third edition. By DR. TRUMBULL. (Hodder and Stoughton.) Dr. Trumbull here deals with the whole subject of the Sunday School teacher's work in a thorough, not to say exhaustive, fashion. The book is a sort of vade mecum, which should be in the hands of every Sunday School teacher. If the valuable hints contained in it were only to be acted upon, the teaching given in Sunday schools would be materially improved in character and effectiveness. The chapter on "Helping Scholars to Christian Decision" is especially worthy of careful consideration, giving as it does wise counsel for the guidance of teachers in their endeavours to bring their scholars to the point of decision for Christ.

